Looking ahead: New COVID-19 research and evaluation capacity for Wales

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Rapid Evaluation Unit: core purpose

• To address the need for relevant, rapid and robust primary or ‘new’ research, alongside evidence synthesis, to address pandemic challenges in Wales

• The Rapid Evaluation Unit will commission/conduct research that:
  • has an applied focus
  • arises out of policy need
  • can be rapidly undertaken to inform policy decisions over the next year (funded to March 23)
Summary of process

- Early ‘quick win/high priority’ research questions
- Questions emerging from WCEC evidence synthesis
- Questions from TAC/TAG subgroups OR other relevant WG groups
- Questions or applications from other stakeholders or research groups in Wales (including PPI)

- Clearly meet criteria following ‘lighter touch’ peer review if necessary
- External peer-review according to criteria

Decision for inclusion in REU work programme (oversight by TAG R&D subgroup)
Criteria for inclusion

1) Addresses the pandemic challenges (including recovery) in the context of Wales
   • high-priority question & clear policy implications for impact

2) Builds on research already undertaken in Wales and their further unanswered questions
   • Evidence Centre Rapid Reviews
   • COVID funding programmes – UKRI etc

3) Utilises particular Welsh expertise for innovative UK / internationally important work on COVID-19 illness, impacts and recovery

4) Deliverable within 1 year, offer value for money, potential for impact/action. Must not be more suitable for alternative funding.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Evidence gaps identified by completed reviews</th>
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<tr>
<td>Long term impact on health and social care workers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Long term impact of lockdown/school closures on CYP and mitigating strategies</td>
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<td>Interventions for supporting post-secondary education</td>
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<td>Benefits, disbenefits and costs of IPAC measures in care sector</td>
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<td>Alternate emergency graduate education delivery for HCPs</td>
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<td>Distance to MVC as a barrier to vaccine equity</td>
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<td>Adherence in using PPBs in public settings</td>
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<td>Home monitoring using pulse oximetry</td>
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<td>Cancer diagnosis - innovations (e.g. cytosponge) for triage in PC</td>
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<td>Cancer diagnosis – direct referral to specialist investigation</td>
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<td>Strategies to address backlog in orthopaedic surgery – demand side</td>
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<td>Strategies to address backlog in orthopaedic surgery – supply side</td>
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How we will do this

• Stakeholder consultation process
  • Public & Patients
  • Health & Social Care Boards; professional societies etc
  • Welsh Government / Technical Advisory Group (TAG) & sub-groups

• Prioritisation
  • Core Team, public contributors
  • TAG R&D subgroup oversight

• Research
  • Research staff in Unit
  • Partners – Welsh universities, NHS Boards etc

• Peer review

• Knowledge mobilisation
  • Communications
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Types of studies

- Relatively small-scale research projects proposed by researchers in Wales
- Range of evaluation methods
  - quantitative
  - qualitative
  - case study methods
  - linked data
Early potential programme

• Long Covid; 7T magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) for brain and brainstem

• Neutralising monoclonal antibodies (nMABs) and other antiviral treatments
  • real world effectiveness study, SAIL Databank

• Vaccination attitudes to inform further booster programmes
Early potential programme

• Social care pay framework
  • real living wage
• Evaluation of mental health of key workers to understand impact and inform intervention
  • evidence synthesis showed need for longitudinal evaluation
• Changes in GPs’ cancer symptoms referral behaviours during pandemic
  • qualitative work
• Evaluation of CO₂ monitors in schools
  • potential TAC prioritisation
• Further questions derived from evidence syntheses
Next steps

• Feedback welcome
• Reach out to stakeholders for new research questions in coming weeks

Interactive Session: Help us to prioritise the research needs and questions that are important

(Primary research & reviews)