

MRC HTMR Impact Award Title: Core Outcome Measures in Effectiveness Trials (COMET Initiative)

Final report

Budget: £9100

Final Spend: £7392

Applicants

Lead applicant: Professor Paula Williamson (University of Liverpool/NW Hub)

Co-applicant: Dr Elizabeth Gargon (University of Liverpool/NW Hub)

Co-applicant: Professor Jane Blazeby (University of Bristol/ConDuCT II)

Co-applicant: Professor Mike Clarke (Queen's University Belfast)

Co-applicant: Professor Doug Altman (University of Oxford)

Co-applicant: Dr Sean Tunis (Center for Medical Technology Policy)

Summary of original objectives

Specific objectives of this proposal were to:

- (1) raise awareness about the importance of core outcome set (COS) development and application;
- (2) discuss issues of generalisability of COS in relation to low and middle-income countries (LMICs); and
- (3) develop a strategy for COMET to support the development, dissemination and use of COS in LMICs.

What Outputs / Examples of impact have been generated or are in progress?

- (i) COMET was able to offer up to five stipends for researchers from LMICs to participate in the COMET VII meeting in Amsterdam in November 2018. We successfully filled four of these, with researchers attending COMET VII from Brazil, India, Kenya and South Africa. One of these researchers also presented her work at the conference. All four recipients said that their awareness of, and understanding of, COS had increased following attendance at the conference. In addition, we held a productive videoconference with Professor Xin Sun from Cochrane China (see Next Steps).
- (ii) We asked each stipend recipient to write a short blog about his or her experience and thoughts about COS, COMET and COMET VII. We asked them to comment specifically on issues of generalisability of COS in relation to LMICs and the challenges of involving individuals from LMICs in COS development. These blogs were included in the COMET Newsletter in April 2019 and are [online](#).
- (iii) COMET's strategy for further supporting the development, dissemination and use of COS in LMICs, developed with our LMIC partners, is in progress. The four stipend recipients have all agreed to be involved in this. We have agreed the best place to start is raising awareness in LMICs. The following activities have or will contribute to this:
 - a. Cochrane Africa sent out the stipend advert to their network of researchers in Africa;

- b. The stipend recipient from India is writing an editorial for publication in an Indian journal;
 - c. The stipend recipient from Brazil has been involved in the development of one COS, and is now assisting another COS developer in Brazil. In addition, he is presenting results regarding the involvement of people from LMICs at the Cochrane Colloquium in Chile on behalf of COMET.
 - d. South Africa Global Health Trials (<https://globalhealthtrials.tghn.org/get-involved/sarf/>) have asked if they can add a link to the blogs on their website (coming soon).
- (iv) We arranged a teleconference meeting with Elizabeth Allen (University of Cape Town) and Trudie Lang (Head of The Global Health Network) to discuss the COMET strategy for further supporting the development, dissemination and use of COS in LMICs. This took place on 27 June 2019 and it was agreed that a survey of researchers should be done (see Next Steps).

Next Steps

- (i) The stipend recipient from Kenya will start a TMRP PhD in October 2019 to study the development and uptake of COS in LMICs. As part of this work, he will conduct a survey of researchers in the Global Health Network membership to elicit thoughts on relevance of existing COS, priority areas, and how best to include LMIC researchers (and patients) in COS development. The results will be used to inform COMET strategy in this area.
- (ii) On 19 July 2019, the Chinese Evidence-based Medicine Center and Cochrane China and Tianjin University of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TUTCM) jointly established the Chinese Research Center for Clinical Trial Core Outcome Sets (ChiCOS). The center has been set up to promote COS and provide methodological support to core outcome set developers in China, with a particular focus on COS for Traditional Chinese Medicine. The COMET Initiative is pleased to collaborate with ChiCOS and provide support and guidance to this exciting new initiative in China.