

Patrons:
Robin Ince
Prof Steve Jones FRS
Sir Michael Rawlins
Lord Dick Taverne QC

HealthWatch

for treatment that works



Registered charity no 1003392

HealthWatch – charitable aims and research

The aims of HealthWatch are:

The advancement for the public benefit of medical knowledge, training and care in all its branches and in particular the development of good practices in the assessment and testing of treatments and the conduct of clinical trials generally and the promotion of high standards of health care by practitioners.

To this end, HealthWatch promotes:

- The assessment and testing of treatments, whether “orthodox” or “alternative”;
- Consumer protection of all forms of health care, both by thorough testing of all products and procedures and better regulation of all practitioners;
- Better understanding by the public and the media that valid clinical trials are the best way of ensuring protection.

HealthWatch does not have the resources to conduct clinical trials itself. However, it is able to undertake the following (this is an indicative list, and other areas of research may be considered appropriate):

- Assess the validity of reported trials and conduct library research on such trials;
- Prepare an evidence-based case for complaint to the Advertising Standards Authority when unjustified claims for health care products and procedures are made in advertising;
- Test the application of consumer protection laws as they are applicable to health care products where there are claims made that are not substantiated by evidence;
- Investigate by questionnaire the extent and style of teaching to medical, dental, nursing and midwifery students, and students of related health care professions, as it covers evidence-based treatments, complementary and alternative medicine;
- Investigate by means of questionnaires and audit the use of evidence-based and alternative and complementary treatments in general practice and other areas of health care;
- Disseminate the results of such research by publication in its Newsletter, on its website and by publication in academic journals and by means of public lectures and press releases.

All of these areas of investigation, research and dissemination fall within the scope of the charitable aims of HealthWatch.

HealthWatch is a charity and will only accept donations from individuals, charitable bodies or trusts that support its aims and objectives. It does not, and will not, accept donations from any commercial organisation, whether connected with conventional or alternative medicine or not. It does not accept advertising on its website and will not establish internet links with any commercial organisation or any website that is perceived as containing advertising for any health care product or procedure. HealthWatch cannot, of course, control other websites that may link to ours, but if inappropriate links to our site are discovered then the offending web-coordinator will be asked to remove the link.

Organisation and rules of the HealthWatch Research Fund

1. The Treasurer of HealthWatch will be responsible for managing the fund, and maintaining a ring-fenced account, with attribution of the appropriate proportion of interest due to the Research Fund.
2. Proposals for research projects that further the aims and objectives of HealthWatch will be evaluated by a sub-committee of the Trustees of HealthWatch, currently comprising Prof David Bender, Prof Debra Bick, Mr Keith Isaacson, Dr James May and Mr Les Rose. If any of these people has a proposal to be discussed, s/he will withdraw from the discussion of that project.
3. The sub-committee may call on members of HealthWatch or other people with specialist knowledge and expertise to provide comments and referees' reports on proposed projects.
4. The recommendations for funding made by the sub-committee must be ratified by a meeting of the Trustees of HealthWatch. This may be a physical meeting or one conducted by email or tele-conferencing.
5. The Treasurer will distribute money to investigators for proposals that have been approved by the Trustees in installments, with further payment being dependent on:
 - a. receipt of acceptable interim progress reports;
 - b. due accounting for all expenditure to date.
6. Only applications from people in the UK can be considered. All members of HealthWatch in the UK will be eligible to propose research projects, and the HealthWatch Research Fund will be widely advertised (eg to Sense About Science, the Nightingale Collaboration, in medical and nursing journals). Applicants who are not members of HealthWatch at the time of submitting a proposal will, if their proposal is approved, be required to join HealthWatch and pay for 5 years membership in advance, such payment not coming from the funding provided by HealthWatch.
7. After the initial round of applications, proposals may be submitted at any time, using an application form that will be posted on the HealthWatch website or provided on request. The following information must be included:
 - a. a title for the proposed project;
 - b. the names, addresses and other contact details of the principal investigator and any collaborators, together with brief cvs to demonstrate their suitability to carry out the proposed project;
 - c. the aims and objectives of the proposed project;
 - d. a statement as to how the proposed project meets the aims and objectives of HealthWatch;
 - e. a detailed description of the project together with a note of the funding requested and justification for that funding, and the intended duration of the project;
 - f. a statement of any other funding available to the principal investigator and any collaborators that may be used to fund part of the proposed project;
 - g. a statement of how the principal investigator intends to disseminate the outcomes of the research project;
 - h. a statement of any conflicting interests, or a statement to the effect that the applicants have none. This should include a statement of any other funding available to the applicants.
8. Applications to the HealthWatch Research Fund may be for sums up to a maximum of £10,000, but it is anticipated that most applications will be for lesser amounts. Proposals for pilot projects, the outcomes of which could subsequently be used to form the basis for application elsewhere for larger sums of money, are welcome.
9. Proper accounting will be required, and receipts must be provided for all expenditure. Claims for entertainment, food and drink will not be permitted, and all claims for traveling expenses must be for the most economical mode of transport (eg standard class rail fare). Car mileage will be refunded at the rate paid by the NHS or the University of London.

10. Grants from the HealthWatch Research Fund may not be used to employ anyone, but they may be used to pay an honorarium to someone who is either employed elsewhere or not. Under some circumstances it may be an appropriate use of the grant to “buy back” time from a researcher’s employer.
11. The Secretary of HealthWatch (currently Prof David Bender) will be the primary liaison contact for all recipients of grants, and interim reports at 3 monthly intervals must be made to the Secretary in order for further installments of the grant to be payable. A final report on the project must be made to the Secretary within 3 months of the conclusion of the project.
12. The Secretary of HealthWatch will maintain records of all proposals, and keep records of interim and final reports.
13. In any publication arising from a funded project, the authors must acknowledge that funding was received from the HealthWatch Research Fund.
14. Whether or not projects result in publication in a peer-reviewed journal, HealthWatch will have the right to publish reports of the outcomes of all funded proposals on its website and in its Newsletter. Such reports will normally be prepared initially by the principal investigator, and any editing for the website and / or Newsletter will be agreed with the principal investigator before publication.