

NHS Blood and Transplant R&D Committee

Status: Official

Annual Report 2018/19

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The R&D Committee has prepared this report to the NHSBT Board to demonstrate how it satisfied its terms of reference during 2018/19.

2. OVERVIEW

The Board has delegated authority to the Committee to provide strategic oversight of an innovative, cohesive, high quality programme of research and development (R&D) which includes a balance of short and long-term research and meets organisational requirements. The Committee aims for timely translation of research findings into new products and services, to deliver improvements to the efficiency, efficacy and safety of blood, tissues, cellular and organ products and services for donors and patients.

The Terms of Reference of the R&D Committee were reviewed by the Committee at their meeting on 12th June 2018. As a result of this review, the Director of Manufacturing and Logistics was added as a member.

3. MEMBERSHIP

The Membership at the end of the reporting period was:

Committee Members

Paresh Vyas (Chair of RDC, Non-Executive Director)
Rob Bradburn (Finance Director)
Anthony Clarkson (Director of Organ Donation and Transplantation)
Vacant (Non-Executive Director)*
Harvey Klein (NIH, USA: External expert)
Greg Methven (Director of Manufacturing & Logistics)
Gail Miflin (Medical & Research Director)
Jeremy Monroe (Non-Executive Director)
Ellen van der Schoot (Sanquin, The Netherlands: External Expert)
Mike Stredder (Director of Blood Donation)
Jonas Wadstrom (University of Stockholm, Sweden: External Expert)
Huw Williams (Director of Diagnostic and Therapeutic Services)

* The vacant 3rd Non-Exec Director position has recently been filled by Piers White.

Observers

Emanuele Di Angelantonio (PI observer)
Rachel Johnson (Associate Director, Statistics & Clinical Studies)
Yomi Adegaju (National Research Manager, Minutes)
Rutger Ploeg (PI observer)
Chris Sims (Planning and Management Accountant, Group Services)

Willem Ouwehand (PI observer)
Nick Watkins (Assistant Director, Research & Development)

4. COMPLIANCE WITH TERMS OF REFERENCE

Formal meetings of the R&D Committee were held on 12th June and 10th December 2018. The December meeting was not quorate because only one External Expert was present. The meeting went ahead with decisions being ratified offline by the two non-attending External Experts.

5. DUTIES AND FINDINGS

1. The Committee reviewed and accepted progress against the objectives of the 2015 – 2020 R&D Strategy. They also reviewed initial priorities for the 2020 – 2025 R&D Strategy;
2. The Committee reviewed and accepted progress reports from the National Institute for Health Research Blood and Transplant Research Units. They also identified initial priority areas for Round 2 of NIHR BTRU funding;
3. The Committee reviewed and accepted the results of the PlaNeT-2 clinical trial of platelet transfusion thresholds in neonates, noting the complexity of the trial and its potential to impact on clinical practice;
4. The Committee reviewed progress the STRIDES cluster randomised trial to evaluate interventions to prevent vasovagal reactions among whole blood donors;
5. The Committee reviewed progress on the Universal Donor Genotyping platform, noting that there was a need for the organisation to consider how best to deploy this technology;
6. The Committee reviewed and accepted progress on the clinical trial of manufactured red cells, confirming their continued support for this important trial;
7. The Committee accepted the final reports on big data pilot studies, noting that these had led to a successful application to Innovate UK for a project to develop an AI/Machine Learning approach to managing the platelet supply chain;
8. The Committee reviewed progress on all active workpackages and projects within the reporting period. They approved the closure of a workpackage on the *role of regulatory T-cells in haematopoietic stem cell transplantation*. They approved funding for a workpackage on *restless leg syndrome in blood donors*.
9. The Committee accepted a report on the activity of our Principal Investigators (PI) and recognised their ability to attract external funding and publish their results in Internationally leading journals;
10. In response to concerns regarding the 100% male Principal Investigator cohort, the Committee approved proposals for developing *Women in Science* and as well as career progression to Principal Investigator. The they commissioned of previous PI recruitment panels did not identify any gender bias in these panels;
11. The Committee accepted annual reports on Intellectual Property, the status of active Trust Fund awards, the Clinical Fellows which we support, the Clinical Trials Unit and the Component Development Laboratory;

12. The Committee agreed a workplan for future meetings.

6. CONCLUSION

The R&D Committee has complied with its terms of reference from 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019.

Nick Watkins, Assistant Director – Research and Development
29th May 2019