

IHI JU Science & Innovation Panel (SIP)

Recommendation to the Governing Board

THEME - HEALTHCARE DELIVERY OPTIMISATION

The SIP sees the issue of how an innovative concept or technology influences or could improve healthcare delivery as a horizontal/cross sectional theme which should be addressed in most calls and potentially projects. While this will not apply to the same extent to all projects, the issue should be considered and checked for applicability.

Several phenomena contribute to increasing financial and workforce related strain on the healthcare system:

- Generally, research widens possibilities and creates new options for care. It also creates new or increasing demands/expectations on healthcare. Therefore, each research proposal should elaborate on presumed effects, and consider to assess these.
- Increasing healthcare demands also result from the chronic disease paradox: better detection and treatment result in more survivors, higher prevalence, and more long -term care needs.
- A broader and more longitudinal perspective of a biopsychosocial model of health and healthcare (including prevention) as opposed to more traditional “treat acutely on demand” medical approach increases the scope and expectations on healthcare professionals, as well as potential need for coordination
- Contentment with “sufficient health” or “sufficient care” may actually be connotated negatively, falling short of “best care”. This may result not only in increase strain on the healthcare system and healthcare providers but can also result in harmful overdiagnosis and overtreatment for the individual patient.
- Via Internet patients and their relatives access information that has not been quality assured and can lead to unrealistic expectations. Handling such expectations may significantly increase the efforts needed of the medical staff to create the trust that is the basis for a good patient care.

Efficacy aspects should therefore be considered in calls and proposals wherever applicable at all. This includes economical efficacy, that is the costs and potential savings engendered by the form of care under scrutiny, as well as organizational

aspects, for example the procedural flow of making this form of care available, and the personnel resources required.

These aspects should be considered on the various levels of healthcare: Citizens/patients, healthcare workers, healthcare organizations (for example practices, hospitals) and related/supporting industry, health systems and health policy.

Questions to ask (within the context of topics/proposals) and which should be included in the template intended for the applicants:

- How do you think to implement the results of this call/proposal into routine healthcare
- What would facilitate this process, which potential barriers do you perceive?
- How could it affect healthcare systems in the relevant countries, or be implemented therein?
- Which resources and policy adaptations would be necessary?
- On which level (patients, individual providers, healthcare institutions, healthcare system) or supporting industry
- Have you identified potential contributing partners that are close to this field?

In addition to this more horizontal view of healthcare delivery issues related to many research proposals, calls or proposal or proposals could also specifically target this problem or aspects thereof, aiming to alleviate specific problems or to improve (economical or organizational aspects of) healthcare delivery e.g. reducing the time needed for medical staff (today a very limited resource in most health care systems) to provide treatment or allow caring for the patient with high quality but on a lower care level (i.e. how would an improved healthcare delivery relief stress of concerned staff).

As to industries joining or co-funding such research, these could be companies involved in the delivery healthcare (for example insurance companies, or care providers or their organisations) or industry developing and producing tools that could be useful in improving healthcare (for example digital hard- or software, communication tools).