

sdo news

No 12 • April 2007

SDO impacts published

Last year's evaluation of the impact of the SDO programme, 2001–2006, has now been published. The assessment looked at our overall performance, with 23 projects selected to represent our wide range of research themes, and the scale and range of our outputs – and demonstrated the value of our research to the NHS.

Two printed publications – a summary and the full report – are available to order online or to download from the SDO website www.sdo.lshtm.ac.uk



SDO commissioning moves online

eCAS February 2007 saw the launch of the eagerly awaited electronic project management system, eCAS (electronic Commissioning and Appraisal System). Designed to streamline the commissioning process for researchers applying for SDO funding, eCAS is a greener, cost-effective and user-friendly online alternative to paper-based commissioning.

An evaluation of the SDO programme's working practices identified a need to simplify, and enhance, the funding application process. Researchers wanted more accessible and transparent application forms; peer reviewers wanted a simpler procedure for reviewing proposals; and the SDO wanted an efficient system for managing proposals and funded projects. The answer? It was time to 'go electronic'.

A year in development, eCAS is a secure, web-based system that can be accessed via the SDO website www.sdo.lshtm.ac.uk and from www.ecas.org.uk. The ultimate aim of eCAS is to make the commissioning experience with the SDO Programme more efficient and user-friendly. The system allows researchers and their organisations to:

- manage CVs, contact and log in information
- electronically submit outline and full research proposals in response to SDO's advertised calls
- register as a peer reviewer, and peer review submitted proposals and reports
- manage SDO-funded projects online

In response to an advertised call, applicants can securely complete and submit a proposal by logging on to eCAS. Most applications now follow a two-stage process requiring an outline and then, if successful, a full proposal to be submitted. The system allows research teams to work together on their applications online, and data validation prevents the submission of proposals that exceed page length or do not contain required data. Once applications have been submitted, applicants can log on to eCAS and view the progress of their proposal throughout the application process.

Successful applications become SDO projects, against which key dates and related information is stored. Automated emails will be sent out by eCAS to researchers to remind them of key dates and milestones, and all reports (progress, interim and final) can be submitted online.

The launch of eCAS has already highlighted the benefits of moving to a fully electronic system. For applicants, this is demonstrated by:

- the ease of managing personal and proposal details through one unique identifier
- cost reduction – there is no longer a requirement to submit 25 hard copies of the proposal
- an increased confidence in submission through automatic 'milestone' reminder emails, date/time stamped proposals and confirmation emails upon submission.

Internally, eCAS provides the SDO Programme with a clearer idea of the workload that will be generated by calls, enabling us to utilise our resources accordingly.

As eCAS develops, we will update you via the newsletter and the SDO and eCAS websites. We welcome feedback from users in order to continue to improve the system, so please email any comments and suggestions to adrian.newman@lshtm.ac.uk



Director's message



I am very pleased that the SDO Programme has been acknowledged in the report of the Cooksey Review as playing 'a highly important role in

establishing the evidence base for the effectiveness, quality and safety of health services'. His report positions SDO in the 'second gap in translation' – that is the challenge of taking knowledge about what works and moving it into widespread adoption. A specific recommendation was that SDO should work to pilot the employment of knowledge transfer champions with NHS organisations. What this will mean in practice has yet to be worked through, but it points to a diversification of the types of activities that SDO funds beyond research commissioning. This can also be seen in our procurement of a management service for the SDO Trust Research Support Network ('SDO-net'), which will also work to strengthen linkage and exchange between the NHS and the research community.

In 2006/07, SDO spent over £7 million on commissioned research, a record for the programme. As ever, we remain concerned that the outputs we fund are relevant and accessible to the NHS. Our impact assessment provides evidence that we are achieving this. To refresh our understanding of research needs and prioritisation, we recently undertook a survey of opinion and I am grateful to the many people who took the time to contribute to this. Analysis of the results from this survey is ongoing, together with deliberation about how SDO should shape its future priorities. We anticipate that the outcome from this process will be the identification of priority areas for future funding and we will publicise these in due course.

Stephen Davies
SDO Programme Director

New SDO publications

Since publishing the last SDO newsletter, the SDO publications library has been growing rapidly, with the addition of nine new research summaries since October 2006. These summaries are available to order online, along with all other SDO publications www.sdo.lshtm.ac.uk/pubrequest.php or to download from the SDO website at www.sdo.lshtm.ac.uk/researchsummaries.html

"... I enjoy your research summaries which are well laid out and easy to read. They should be a model for many others to copy." Service delivery manager



Can primary care reform reduce demand on hospital outpatient departments?

A review of the evidence for four different approaches to reducing demand for specialist outpatient treatment.

"We are doing projects on demand management of outpatients from primary care ... these summaries are useful tools to persuade doubtful colleagues." Head of clinical governance



Continuity of care in type 2 diabetes: patients', professionals' and carers' experiences and health outcomes

An investigation into the relevance of continuity in the

care of type 2 diabetes, and whether it is associated with improved clinical and patient outcomes.



Improving children's health – can nurses, midwives and health visitors make a difference?

A study that looked at the role and contribution of nurses, midwives and health visitors to children's health and associated services.



Decentralisation: a model to follow in the NHS?

A review of the evidence to assess the consequences of policies of decentralisation, centralisation and devolution in the NHS.



Self-assessment of health and social care needs by older people

The findings of a review of self-assessment in health and social care.



Making change happen in the NHS: clinical and management tasks

A study that examined the ways in which managers from clinical and non-clinical backgrounds interpret and carry out their roles in the process of implementing service improvements.

"I think the findings have relevance within my own organisation regarding the gaps between policy and operations." Service delivery manager



New governance, more incentives: but can they really improve care?

A review that explored the incentive effects of different forms of governance on health and social care organisations.

"This paper will provide additional insight that could aid effectiveness and provide direction."

Nurse/Manager



Involving service users in nursing, midwifery and health visiting research

A review of the research evidence and current practice on service user involvement in designing and undertaking nursing, midwifery and health visiting research.



Vulnerable groups and access to health care

A study that looked at why vulnerable groups may face greater difficulties in accessing health care, and how to make access fairer and more uniform

across the NHS.

"... [this research summary] will help stimulate a more productive discussion on how we tackle this agenda." Director of public health

Commissioned projects

Since October 2006, the date of the last newsletter, the SDO Programme has contracted the following projects. Further details of each project are available on the SDO website www.sdo.lshtm.ac.uk

Change management

- SDO/148 – A synthesis of reviews on leadership in health care

Evaluating models of service delivery

- SDO/140 – The Evaluation of Maternity Units (EMU)
- SDO/142 – In-patient staff morale: a national investigation
- SDO/146 – The nursing, midwifery and health visiting contribution to CDM: an integration of the literature
- SDO/150 – Scoping study of the public health system in England
- SDO/151 – Evaluating models of care closer to home for children and young people who are ill
- SDO/163 – Locked doors in acute psychiatry, outcome and acceptability

Patient- and carer-centred services

- SDO/144 – To complete the development and testing of the carers' and users' expectations of services – carers' version
- SDO/145 – Health, medicines and self-care choices made by children, young people and their families: information to support decision making
- SDO/147 – A comparative study of the construction and implementation of patient choice policies in the UK
- SDO/152 – Shaping our future: a scoping exercise and consultation exercise to establish research priorities in Learning Disabilities for the next ten years
- SDO/153 – Information for choice: what people need, prefer and use

- SDO/154 – To evaluate a new model improving access to psychological therapies
- SDO/160 – Effective ways for professionals to involve carers in information sharing: a training resource
- SDO/161 – Self-management support among older adults: the availability, impact and potential of locally based services and resources
- SDO/162 – Evaluating self-care support for children and young people with long term conditions

Studying health care organisations

- SDO/149 – Comparative evaluation of children's services networks; overcoming professional, organisational and sector boundaries in paediatric nephrology, child protection and cleft lip and palate networks
- SDO/157 – Investigating the governance of Foundation Trusts
- SDO/158 – The impact of incentives on the behaviour and performance of primary care professionals

Workforce

- SDO/134 – Mobility of health professionals in Europe PROFMOBILITY – UK case study
- SDO/155 – Nature and consequences of support workers in a hospital setting
- SDO/159 – Evaluation of the development and impact of assistant practitioners supporting the work of ward-based registered nurses in acute NHS (Hospital) Trusts in England

Researcher news

Dr Pinfold's podcast

Courtesy of the Royal College of Psychiatrists, Vanessa Pinfold discusses the importance of sharing service user information with carers in a podcast. Dr Pinfold was involved in the project **SDO/54/Huxley** which was a national study of mental health professionals' information sharing practices with carers of people with mental health problems. The podcast is available to download at www.sdo.lshtm.ac.uk/160podcast.html

Congratulations on fellowship



The SDO Programme's academic director Dr Stuart Anderson, who was previously a senior pharmacy manager in the NHS, has been

designated a Fellow of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society. Fellowships are awarded to members who have made a distinguished contribution to the profession.

SDO in Evidence and Policy

The SDO's academic staff, led by Dr Pauline Allen, have published an article "Commissioning research that is used: the experience of the NHS Service Delivery and Organisation Research and Development Programme" in *Evidence and Policy* 2007, Vol 3(1). They discuss the experiences of the SDO in transferring knowledge from research into practice, concluding that a key to successful knowledge transfer is to achieve significant interaction between decision makers and research commissioners as early as possible.

Record budget spend for SDO

This financial year (2006/07), the SDO Programme spent more on commissioned research than ever before, committing its entire budget of £7.3 million. In tandem with the record spend, SDO now has an increasingly exciting and varied research portfolio.

Centre Director Pamela Baker said: "Our

spending success is due to a combination of great planning and good work from all involved with the programme. Next year will be just as exciting as we will begin to reap the benefits of eCAS."

The SDO looks forward to the challenges of 2007/08 and to spending our allocated commissioning budget of £8.7 million.

SDO-Net

During 2005, the idea of an NHS Trust Research Support Network was formulated following discussions within a forum of NHS Chief Executives that supports the SDO's national programme of research. In response to this, the SDO Programme agreed to sponsor a voluntary network of NHS Trusts – SDO-Net.

The key aim of the Network is to bridge the gap between researchers, policy makers and health services (managers and professionals) to maximise the value of health research. Its mission is to facilitate research activity in NHS Trusts and to stimulate a closer relationship between research and practice.

The Network was officially 'launched' at the

NHS Confederation Conference at the ICC, Birmingham on 15 June 2006. Expressions of interest to participate in the Network number 125 NHS Trusts and 56 PCTs. This high level of initial interest suggests that there are drivers for increased engagement in the specific area of service delivery and organisation.

A very successful tendering process has been taking place since November 2006 to find a management team that will develop and deliver a programme of activities to operationalise the concept of the Network and to meet the specified aims and objectives. SDO hopes to announce the successful applicant(s) at this year's conference (9 May 2007).

New SDO calls advertised

MFC193 – Organisational and service delivery aspects of medicines for children

Within the Patient- and carer-centred services theme

PCC190 – Continuity of care for offenders

The next call for proposals is planned for 23 May 2007.

Details of SDO calls for proposals can be found at www.ecas.org.uk

The Sixth National SDO Conference

CME Accredited

Wednesday 9 May 2007
Church House, Westminster, London

A one-day conference for those concerned with the delivery and management of effective, evidence-based health care – service users, health service managers, health professionals and policy makers.

With keynote speakers:

Professor Sally Davies

Director of Research and Development, Department of Health

David Blumenthal MD

Director of the Institute for Health Policy, Massachusetts General Hospital/Partners HealthCare System, Boston

A copy of the conference programme is available to download at www.sdo.lshtm.ac.uk/conference2007.html

For further information, please contact Healthcare Events on 020 8541 1399 or email katie@healthcare-events.co.uk



ABOUT THE SDO PROGRAMME

The Service Delivery and Organisation Programme (SDO), set up in 2000, is part of the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR).

The NIHR SDO Programme improves health outcomes for people by:

- commissioning research and producing research evidence that improves practice in relation to the organisation and delivery of health care, and
- building capacity to carry out research amongst those who manage, organise and deliver services and improve their understanding of research literature and how to use research evidence.

The National Co-ordinating Centre for the SDO Programme (NCCSDO) is based at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine and manages the SDO programme.

For further information about the NCCSDO or the SDO Programme visit our website at: www.sdo.lshtm.ac.uk

or write to:

The Programme Manager
NCCSDO

London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine
99 Gower Street

London WC1E 6AA

Tel: +44 (0)20 7612 7980

Fax: +44 (0)20 7612 7979

Email: sdo@lshtm.ac.uk

In order to produce a newsletter that is both informative and newsworthy your feedback would be greatly appreciated. Please email comments, suggestions or ideas to:

emma.hawkrige@lshtm.ac.uk



This document was published by the National Coordinating Centre for the Service Delivery and Organisation (NCCSDO) research programme, managed by the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine.

The management of the Service Delivery and Organisation (SDO) programme has now transferred to the National Institute for Health Research Evaluations, Trials and Studies Coordinating Centre (NETSCC) based at the University of Southampton. Prior to April 2009, NETSCC had no involvement in the commissioning or production of this document and therefore we may not be able to comment on the background or technical detail of this document. Should you have any queries please contact sdo@southampton.ac.uk.