

Health and Wellbeing in New Zealand

Investment Signal 2012

Contract types available: Projects and Programmes

The purpose of this Investment Signal is to seek high-quality, investigator-initiated research projects that can contribute to keeping people healthy and independent throughout life.

Scope

All research for which there is a clear link between the knowledge generated and improving the health and wellbeing of individuals and populations is within scope for this Investment Signal.

All aspects of enhancing health and wellbeing are covered, from understanding normal human biological processes and development, to policy and interventions to reduce the impact of social and environmental determinants of disease. Research to understand the biological, behavioural, social, cultural, environmental and occupational processes that underpin health and wellbeing is included, as is research on fundamental biological processes underpinning the development of multiple diseases. Health promotion, health protection and the primary prevention of disease and injury through identification and mitigation of risk factors is in scope.

No research is excluded from this Research Investment Stream on the basis of methodological approach. Applicants who believe their proposal is in scope for more than one Research Investment Stream should choose the stream in which their research will make the greatest contribution to the goals. Box A provides **examples** of research areas in scope for this Investment Signal.

Goals

The HRC has set the following goals for research funded through this Research Investment Stream. All applications will be assessed on science quality *and* the extent to which the application has impact¹ in relation to one or more of the goals in this Research Investment Stream. The goals are:

- Understanding, maintaining and enhancing the health and wellbeing of all people throughout life;
- Preventing disease and injury;
- Understanding and reducing inequalities in risk factors and determinants for disease and injury;
- Driving innovation through the creation of new knowledge relating to health and wellbeing, and
- Delivering direct economic benefits for New Zealand, in addition to achieving a primary outcome of health benefit.

Research Priorities

Proposals are more likely to demonstrate impact with respect to the goals of the Investment Signal if they address:

1. Research that has potential for substantial improvements in outcomes or advances in knowledge relevant to health and wellbeing.
2. Prevention of disease or injury that is associated with substantial mortality, morbidity or social cost in New Zealand.
3. Reducing inequalities for those facing the greatest burden of disease. In New Zealand, Māori and Pacific populations face significant inequalities spanning a wide range of disease states^{[1],[2]}. Therefore, research seeking to enhance the health and wellbeing of these populations is a priority.
4. Health and wellbeing for vulnerable populations (including children, youth and older adults) and those with impairment living in a disabling society.

1. Applicants are strongly advised to review the Assessment Criteria. Impact on the RIS goal(s) is one component which makes up the score for impact, worth 25 per cent of the overall score.

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Further Information

Applicants should refer to the overarching document 'General Guidelines' and relevant information on the application and assessment process. All documents are available on the HRC website, www.hrc.govt.nz.

Box A: Examples of Areas in Scope for this Investment Signal

Research within scope includes, **but is not limited to**, that which seeks to understand and/or improve:

- Pathological processes relevant to *a number of* diseases or conditions;
- The development of animal models or technology platforms to underpin research on enhancing health and wellbeing or investigating multiple diseases;
- Primary prevention of any disease or injury, including communicable and non-communicable diseases, mental health conditions, suicide, addiction, and prevention of violence;
- Population health interventions such as screening or immunisation;
- Health throughout life, including normal development, reproductive, maternal and early childhood health, child and adolescent health, and health in aging;
- Social and cultural determinants of health, wellbeing, disease and injury;
- Harmful behaviours, such as smoking, excess salt or alcohol consumption, poor nutrition and physical inactivity, and the societal conditions and industry practices that may contribute to them;
- Health system and health service contribution to maintaining and enhancing health and wellbeing, or preventing disease and injury;
- Occupational and environmental health;
- Social context of disability, disease and injury;
- Policy, health promotion and intervention programmes;
- Consequences of global health and environmental conditions (for example, climate change);
- Links between global and local influences on health, and
- Risks to the health of emerging population groups, for example, Asian communities in New Zealand.

What research is better aligned with other Investment Signals?

Research Area	Relevant Investment Stream
Research that generates knowledge on the diagnosis, treatment and management of people with specific conditions/diseases. Biomedical research to understand the pathology of a specific acute or chronic condition.	Improving Outcomes for Acute and Chronic Conditions in New Zealand
Māori health research may also be eligible for the Rangahau Hauora Māori stream if it meets the six goals specified in the Investment Signal.	Rangahau Hauora Māori
Research intended to generate improvements in health service delivery in the short-to-medium term (within five years of the research contract commencing).	New Zealand Health Delivery

The information provided in this table is a general guideline only. Researchers are advised to review *all* Investment Signals to establish which one is the best fit for their proposed research.

References

- [1] Ministry of Health. 2010. *Tatau Kahukura: Māori Health Chart Book 2010*, 2nd Edition. Wellington: Ministry of Health.
[2] Ministry of Health. 2004. *Tupu Ola Moui: Pacific Health Chart Book 2004*. Wellington: Ministry of Health.