

The Clinical Trial 'Straight Jacket'

Disservices to Minority Groups and Health Inequalities Research

The Problem:

- ↳ Minoritised populations are under-represented in clinical trials in US & UK. Legislation and regulation (notably in US) has improved representation and diversity in clinical trial, but only marginally.
- ↳ Failure to include ethnic minorities, in particular, is often justified either on grounds of the additional costs required, or because they are 'hard-to-reach'.

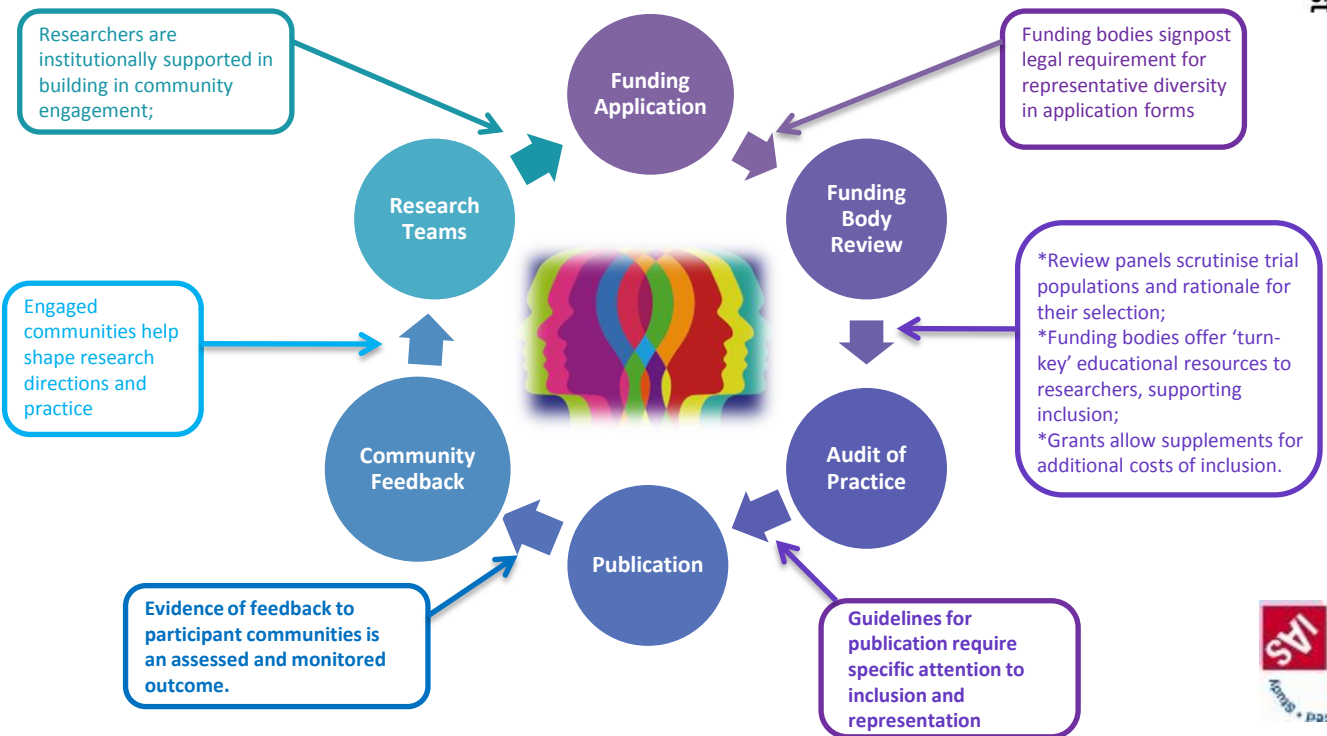
Clinical Trials:

We would argue that the problems are, in part, structural: the rigid nature of the clinical trial format can make it very challenging to identify and incorporate members of communities who already face higher hurdles to healthcare access. Moreover, evidence from the trans-disciplinary published and grey literature suggests clinical trials do not effectively assess complex interventions necessary to ameliorate health inequalities.

This partly reflects their inflexible structure. From ethical approval and recruitment, through randomisation to intervention and control groups, participant retention and publication, the current RCT methodology disadvantages both minority participants and communities. This potentially breaches the legal framework established by the 2010 Equality Act. Moreover, it is questionable how well the findings of RCTs generalise to the realities of clinical practice.

IDEA Collaboration:

Working across disciplines through discussion and literature review, the IDEA Collaboration has tentatively identified a set of 'pinch points' at which inclusion of minority groups into mainstream planning can be mandated as good practice in the conduct of clinical trials. While no one of these interventions has as yet proved sufficient, we feel that the suite proposed below would empower researchers to better serve ethnic minority communities -- and their respective disciplines.



Collaborators

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Getting involved:

We welcome the input of researchers and research users from any background. Colleagues can join us as virtual members for open access to our online resources and webinars. Virtual members are invited to comment on these resources and to bring their experiences and expertise to bear on the complex problems involved in ethnicity and health research and practice. Visit our website at: <http://www.warwick.ac.uk/go/ideacollab> or e-mail: r.bivins@warwick.ac.uk

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