



IMSANZ Research Network

Terms of Reference 2022-2024

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Mission statement

To promote collaborative research within general medicine that delivers evidenced-based and meaningful outcome improvements for our patients and the health-system.

Objectives

- Establishment of the IMSANZ-RN infrastructure
 - Develop IMSANZ-RN governance structure.
 - Define roles within IMSANZ-RN Steering Committee.
 - Embed research streams within RN structure and appoint prominent leads/mentors.
 - Engage with interested IMSANZ members and departments across all workplace settings.
 - Leverage existing university or institution resources.
 - Build links with other medical specialty research networks.
 - Develop an engagement and communication platform for members to connect and exchange ideas.
- Setting research agenda
 - Promote diverse, collaborative, and multi-centre research while also setting specific and deliverable research priorities/topics for set terms.
 - Engage with stakeholders including interested IMSANZ members, general medical departments, patients, health departments and government agencies in agenda setting.
 - Develop criteria and process for endorsement of research proposals based on priorities.
- Develop general medicine research expertise, scope and impact
 - Define collective research expertise and identify mentors for specific streams.
 - Research skills training.
 - Disseminate information on existing funding opportunities.
 - Engage with health departments and external funding bodies.

The strategic objectives identified herein will guide the establishment phase of IMSANZ-RN over the next two years from 2022-2024. Thereafter, these objectives will be revised to serve the ongoing priorities and needs of IMSANZ researchers.

Structure and governance

Steering Committee

At inception, the IMSANZ-RN steering committee was pragmatically composed of the initiating 2 co-leads, the IMSANZ president, vice-president, former president and IMSANZ CEO. Representation was sought from all Australian states and from Aotearoa New Zealand.

The IMSANZ-RN steering committee is accountable to the board of IMSANZ.

The IMSANZ-RN steering committee shall consist of:

- Chair
- Vice chair
- IMSANZ president
- IMSANZ CEO
- Australian representative(s)
- Aotearoa New Zealand representative(s)
- Additional committee members will be sought to reflect the geographical diversity of our members and the diversity of research methodologies.

The total number of steering committee members is at present not capped and preference will be given to members who provide both geographical representation and required expertise.

Terms

Each committee member will serve a 2-year term with the option of 2 renewals i.e. 6 years being the longest serving total term. Membership of the steering committee will be open to all IMSANZ-RN members (see 'Network membership') who are active researchers with a track-record of peer-reviewed publications. Expressions of interest will be sought through advertisement to IMSANZ members.

Meetings

The committee will meet at least 4 times per year. Additional meetings may be required.

A quorum is defined as a minimum of 50% of the IMSANZ-RN steering committee membership.

General network membership

Membership of the IMSANZ-RN is open to all IMSANZ members. Membership is individual. All members of the steering committee and researchers whose projects are endorsed, supported, and partnered by IMSANZ-RN will gain automatic membership. Other IMSANZ members who are interested in research can express their interest to IMSANZ-RN membership by contacting IMSANZ office.

Membership benefits

We plan to develop the following infrastructure to grow the network. General network membership will provide:

- Access to IMSANZ-RN networking events
- Access to the IMSANZ-RN member registry
- Ability to seek endorsement or support for projects
- Access to the IMSANZ-RN mailing list

Research proposal submission and support process

IMSANZ-RN welcomes submission of research proposals and seeks to promote studies that are of sound scientific rationale, are feasible to conduct, add value to patient care and health system and promote general medicine.

The purpose of promotion under the IMSANZ-RN banner may range from seeking multi-site collaboration e.g., for recruitment, building a multidisciplinary investigative team or seeking formal endorsement which identifies the study as a significant contribution to the general medical literature.

Investigator-initiated studies, and those that receive funding from research institutions or government agencies are favoured over industry-sponsored studies.

The IMSANZ-RN promotes research proposals in 3 categories:

- 1. IMSANZ-RN endorsed studies:** Through this mechanism, the research proposal has been considered by IMSANZ-RN Steering Committee as meeting major research priorities in the categories and themes listed below, is of merit and high-quality, is well-designed and is preferably a multi-centre and/or multidisciplinary study. The purpose of the endorsement process is to help researchers advertise their major projects and support funding applications. All IMSANZ-RN endorsed studies will be advertised as an active project on the IMSANZ-RN website. A letter of support will be provided to the investigators of endorsed studies. Publications culminating from completed projects will also be made available on the IMSANZ-RN website.

Requirements for IMSANZ-RN endorsed studies

To be considered under the category of IMSANZ-RN endorsed studies, the research proposals should be in the following priority categories:

- Quality improvement studies
- Clinical trials
- Health service evaluation studies and
- Clinical decisions/clinical reasoning studies

AND should prioritise the following research themes:

- Acute medicine and acute care
- Multimorbidity assessment and management
- Chronic disease management
- Perioperative medicine

The proposed studies should preferably be multi-centre and/or multidisciplinary studies.

- 2. IMSANZ-RN supported studies:** Through this mechanism, IMSANZ members can advertise their research proposals on the IMSANZ-RN website and attempt to connect with interested collaborators to form larger research alliances. As the purpose of the support process is to help researchers who are embarking on new studies find potential collaborators, supported studies do not need to meet the requirements as endorsed studies (as above). We encourage submission of projects that will benefit from the formation of multi-centre and/or multidisciplinary research alliance through advertisement, or high-quality single centre/network projects. All IMSANZ-RN supported studies will be advertised as an active project on the IMSANZ-RN website. Publications culminating from completed projects in this category will also be made available on the IMSANZ-RN website. Supported studies may become 'endorsed studies' if the requirements above are fulfilled as they progress.

- 3. IMSANZ-RN partnered studies:** Through this mechanism, IMSANZ members collaborating in work led predominantly by other research networks (e.g. ASID CRN), can get their involvement recognised under IMSANZ-RN, subject to approval by the IMSANZ-RN Steering Committee. All IMSANZ-RN partnered studies will be advertised as an active project on the IMSANZ-RN website. Publications culminating from completed projects in this category will also be made available on the IMSANZ-RN website.

Submission process

Proposals in any category can be submitted any time by completing the **Research Proposal Submission Form** and emailing to IMSANZ office imsanz@imsanz.org.au.

Proposals will be reviewed by members of the IMSANZ-RN Steering Committee to determine if they are appropriate for consideration. If deemed appropriate, the principal investigator will then be requested to submit a full study protocol for review by the IMSANZ-RN Steering Committee for a final decision. IMSANZ-RN members who have conflicts of interest will be exempted from the decision-making process.

Publication policy

If the study is supported or endorsed by IMSANZ-RN, at the end of all listed authors, we highly recommend that the phrase 'for Internal Medicine Society of Australia and New Zealand – Research Network' be included.

If the study is partnered with IMSANZ-RN, we highly recommend that the following acknowledgement be included: 'This study was conducted in partnership with Internal Medicine Society of Australia and New Zealand – Research Network.'

Aborted studies will however be removed from the website.

IMSANZ conference

The IMSANZ-RN committee will facilitate sessions at the annual IMSANZ conference including a 90-minute session at 'Trainee's Day.' The purpose of this is to provide research training and showcase endorsed studies.

TOR revision

Terms of reference will be reviewed at the start of each 2-year term.