Top Tips: NIHR EDI Seminar

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Equality Diversity and Inclusion

Equality: Ensuring that everyone is given equal access to resources and opportunities to utilise their skills and talents. **Diversity:** Being reflective of the wider community. Having a diverse community, with people from a broad range of backgrounds represented in all areas and at all levels. **Inclusion:** An approach where individuals with different backgrounds are welcomed, culturally and socially accepted, and treated equally. Engaging with each person as an individual.

NIHR Challenges with EDI

- Select people from certain backgrounds have benefited from NIHR funding. Women are less likely to receive senior awards from NIHR as well as those from ethnic minority backgrounds and those with a disability.
- Complex cultural issues of bullying, harassment and victimisation.
- Inequalities associated with sexual orientation, gender identity, socio-economic status, geographic location and ability to access health and social care.
- NIHR are aware that a certain group of people have been privileged from the NIHR system and have concerns around inequitable funding.

NIHR 5 Strategic Themes

In response to these challenges, NIHR have developed 5 themes within their EDI Strategy.

1. Become a more inclusive funder of research. Open to all regardless of caring responsibilities, career breaks and backgrounds.
2. Widen access and participation for greater diversity and inclusion. How do we ensure women take part in research and clinical trials.
3. Improve and Invest in the NIHR talent pipeline
4. Embed evidence-led diversity and inclusion approaches
5. Collaborate with partners for impact and sustainability

The Equality Act 2010

- There are 9 characteristics specified in the Act, and all are afforded equal protection.
  These are:
  - Age, Disability, Gender reassignment, Marriage and civil partnership, Pregnancy and maternity, Race & ethnicity, Religion or belief, Sex and Sexual orientation

- All 9 characteristics specified in The Equality Act 2010 are important and must be considered in applications for research funding. Any of these characteristics can impact research findings.
- NIHR also emphasise the importance of the following:
  - Socioeconomic status
  - Neurodiversity
  - Geography
  - Literacy
  - Caring Commitments

Implementing EDI in the research lifecycle – Considerations for researchers

- **Identification and Prioritisation**
  Is there contact with existing groups or patient forums to help inform your priorities? How has data been used to inform the identification of a research study? Could you hold a one-off focus group to bring together people living with a disease condition to identify the most important research topics? Could you contact individual patients in the clinic (through staff) to better understand their unmet needs?

- **Research Design**
  Has an equality impact assessment been conducted? When this is conducted effectively it can mitigate discrimination as it is a legislative tool to prevent discrimination. It encourages you to consult and reach out to people with lived experiences to inform research design. NIHR recommend the use of this tool as part of all funding applications.

- **Application and Management**
  Defining a study population is crucial for creating an equitable research study. Inclusion and exclusion criteria may intentionally or unintentionally research findings whose results are not applicable for certain groups. Has consideration been given to recruitment and diversity of research participants?

- **Analysing and Interpreting**
  Researchers should aim to prevent marginalisation in data. How will you report on protected characteristics? What intersections of characteristics will you analyse? Have diverse groups been incorporated to support the interpretation of results? The RDS EDI toolkit can help with this.

- **Dissemination and Implementation**
  How will research findings be applied to specific groups? What forms of dissemination might be the most effective in reaching those who could use, or might benefit from, the findings? Is accessibility considered in the planning of dissemination formats? Have you budgeted for language translation etc. as appropriate?

EDI is protected by legislation and focuses on equality of opportunity.

You can access University of Manchester information on Equality Impact Assessments, forms and training here.

Top tips on embedding EDI in your funding application

1. Ensure you know which inequalities are relevant to your field. Make it clear who is affected by a certain health condition. It is useful to know if prevalence, detection, and prognosis varies for groups as this is common and reviewers need to understand what the differences are. Consider this in research literature reading when writing your bid and if you don't find any data this itself is important. For example, research shows diagnostic pathway differences for womb cancer in the LGBT community depending on gender identity and sexual identity.

2. Demonstrate how your research is shaped by diversity of the voices of those with lived experiences. Having a diverse research team leads to diversity in science. Researchers should also implement diversity in public involvement of research. Don't rely on established PPI groups -*diversity is tokenistic without inclusion.*

3. Consider how methodological innovation could overcome exclusionary aspects of conventional methods. Consider what will happen if you need to capture answers from a group who can't answer structured questions. Do not rely on verbal/ written communication too much. Not everyone can articulate experiences in certain ways. For example Covid led to an increase in remote monitoring which in some research areas can be continued but in others remote working does not work.

4. Locate your study where the need is greatest. Think about where problems are greatest, but research activity is most sparse. Use tools like the [CRN research targeting tool](#), [NIHR digital adult social care outcomes frameworks](#) or [SHAPE atlas](#).

5. Substantiate your EDI statements. Good intentions are not enough. Show what relevant experience the research team has this may include language skills. There are different inclusion measures depending on groups which need to be considered.

6. Specify which EDI data you will collect and how you will use it. People are usually willing to provide data if they understand why it is being collected and how it will be used. Take caution around terminology and draw on diverse PPI and resources such as the [EDIS DAISY guidance](#)

7. For quantitative studies, consider including exploratory sub-group analyses alongside the main analysis. For qualitative studies, use EDI data to contextualise the analysis, code for EDI dimensions whilst being mindful of protecting anonymity.

8. Budget for inclusion. Justify all costs and how they are essential to facilitate inclusive research. [The RDS EDI toolkit](#) gives examples of costs and time implications of genuinely inclusive research

9. Use resources available to help you. The RDS toolkit is split into 8 domains, with further information available [here.](#)

Contacts and resources

- [University of Manchester EDI team](#)
- [NIHR Research Design Service North West - RDS NW](#)
- [Research Development support in FBMH](#)
- [Research Impact in FBMH](#)
- [Translational research support in Manchester](#)