

Winning the Grant: How to Write Proposals that Get Funded



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Why should anyone give you money?



How will you decide who to give money to?

Important problem

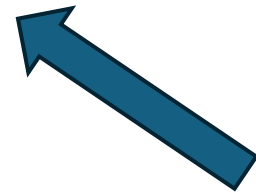
You seem competent

You have put together a team that complement each other

The methods you propose are likely to answer the question or find a solution

Value for money

It appears that you are committed to deliver



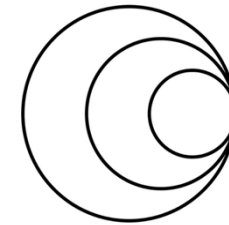
Is it an important problem?

- Important to Sri Lanka and rest of the world?
- Why should anyone spend money finding answers to it? E.g. diabetes in South Asians?
- If it is so important, others must be working on it. How different is what you propose than what others have done or are doing?
- Why do you say you are going to answer a critical gap in knowledge? Are you sure no one has tried before?

How do you identify the most important research questions in a given field?

- Read and read and read..... Everything (journal articles and preprints)
- Follow people on social media (e.g. X, LinkedIn), where most put updates
- Listen in to the numerous webinars, conferences and workshops (many have free virtual options)

Please do not do what others have already extensively researched!



**wellcome
connecting
science**



How do you write the introduction? Research question?

- Short, sweet and to the point.
- Don't bluff!: The question should be very clear in your mind. If its not, it can never be in the reader's mind.
- Write long irrelevant things: people have short attention span and have no time to waste
- Use different terms at different times: DENV, DEN, Den (do not irritate the reviewer)

Impact/significance

- SL grants: economic impact
 - Finding a diagnostic test: early identification, prognosis
 - Finding a treatment: less disability and patients get better early
 - Community perception, attitudes etc: better targeted delivery of health care
- NRC: What Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) align with the project?
- SL and all other grants: overall impact on health of humankind

What makes your proposal special?

- Answering a question that has never been looked at?
- Finding a different approach to answer a question?

Hypothesis

- To the point and clear
- Whole rationale behind the research question

The main hypothesis of this study is that the sPLA₂ inhibitor derived from *Tragia hispida* can significantly reduce venom-induced sPLA₂ activity and downstream inflammatory and vascular complications, particularly in hump-nosed viper envenomation.

We will test the hypothesis that sub-optimum, cross-reactive immune responses generated by prior exposure to ZIKV, or DENV (through natural infection or vaccination) combined with comorbidities, increase dengue disease severity, which will be addressed through the following specific objectives.

Objectives/Aims?

- Some SL grant: General objective and then specific objectives
- NRC: Objectives
- NSF: Overall aim and then specific objectives
- Many international grants: Aims
- Some international grants: work packages

How are you going to answer the question or provide a solution?

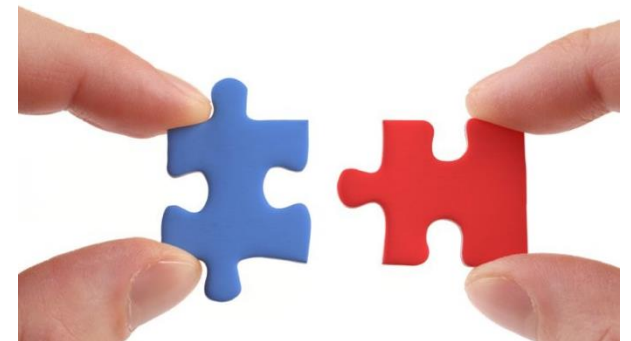
- Is your approach rational? Does it really answer the question?
- Do you seem to know what you are talking about?

Investigating anti-inflammatory properties of X plant:

- What do you mean by anti-inflammatory?
- Do the experiments you plan to do, really show that something is anti-inflammatory?

Identifying a biomarker to predict parkinsonism

- How are you going to make sure that its related to parkinsonism?
- Can it be elevated in other conditions?



Are you using the right tools?

- If you are not using the most reliable or acceptable tools/assays, why not?
- How will that affect your results and outcomes?
- Who are what are your controls?
- How do you eliminate bias?
- What is your experience in using these tools? How well can you interpret these results?
- Do you seem to understand what you are talking about?



Feasibility: timelines and budget

- Can you achieve what you have mentioned in the given timelines?
- Does it look like you are wasting time: first 6 months-literature review???
- How reasonable is your budget? Have you over-estimated or under-estimated?
- Does it look like you are wasting money?

Are you competent?

Qualifications? = Ability?

Best indicator: You have previously delivered

But what if it's your first time?

Getting your first grant...

- Important to show you have done research with other senior people
- You played a significant part in those projects
- You are genuinely interested in the research question you are trying to solve
- You really do want to do research



Continuing your journey as a researcher- are you worth it?

- Are you serious and committed to the problem you want to solve?
- Are you progressing towards being an expert?
- Are you going to make a difference to the field?



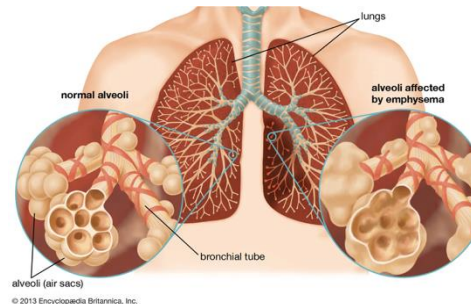
Why should you identify a research area?

Respiratory/Chest physician Expertise in managing with patients

- Asthma
- COPD
- Pneumonia
- Tuberculosis
- Interstitial lung diseases
- Sleep apnea
- Bronchiectasis
- Lung rehabilitation



Would it be suitable
for this person to
engage in research in
any of these areas?



Desquamative interstitial pneumonia

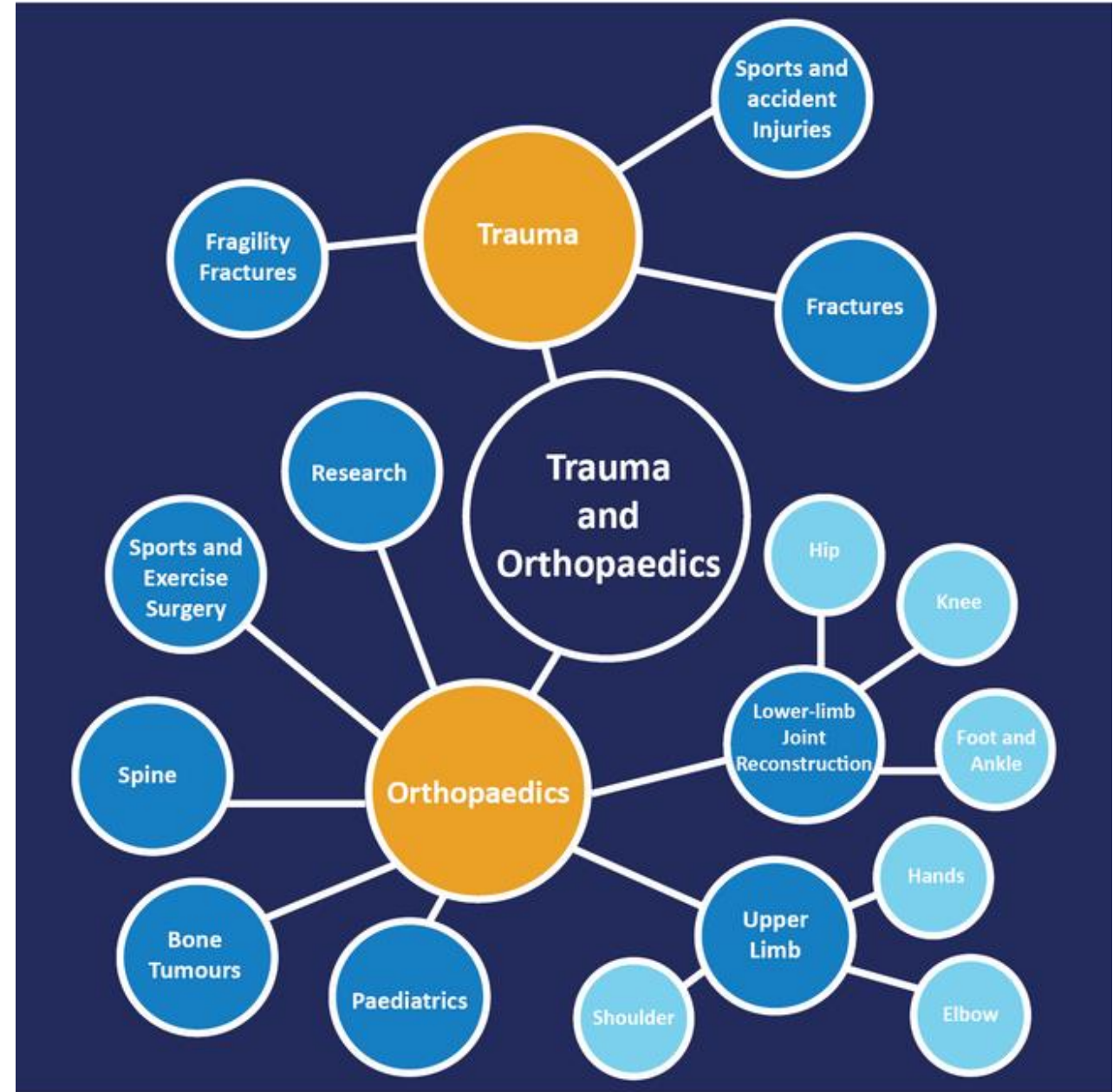




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BY THE EXPERTS FOR...

Types of Cardiology Department in a Hospital

1. General Cardiology
2. Interventional Cardiology
3. Electrophysiology (EP) Cardiology
4. Pediatric Cardiology
5. Preventive Cardiology
6. Heart Failure and Transplant Cardiology



Identifying strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

- Access to patients
- Disease mainly present in SL and similar countries
- Relatively lower cost of patient recruitment/community studies
- Working with a large group of equal minded people who get on well
- High disease burden-easier to identify specific research questions

Vs



Weaknesses

- Disease predominantly present in HICs
- Large groups of scientists already working on many research questions
- Lack of infrastructure to initiate the studies
- Although a problem in Sri Lanka, not much attention given locally or internationally (unless you can sell the idea)

Where are you in this curve?

