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I want to be involved, but don't know much about research – can I still participate?

The Research Challenge is perfect for you! We've designed the Challenge to teach beginners the basics of research.

Who can apply to the Research Challenge?

The Research Challenge is designed to provide a team-based experience to support point-of-care clinicians who have little or no research experience (e.g. conducting research is not part of their job description). This initiative is open to all point-of-care staff employees of BC Cancer. To be eligible, teams have to:

1. Include at least one point-of-care staff member (i.e. maintains a clinical practice and is not purely managerial or in an education/research role).
2. Be a minimum of two (but we recommend 3+ people to better share the workload).
3. Designate a team leader (must be full/part time, employed at BC Cancer for a minimum of one year).

How much research award money is available for teams who win the challenge?

Winning teams will receive a maximum of \$5K in award funding.

What will be expected of participants?

- Applicants will find team members and submit the Letter of Intent (LOI).
- Teams are expected to complete the Research Challenge online course, attend 3 webinars (literature review, research methods & patient-oriented research, and research budget), and 2 one-on-one consultations on research methods and research ethics applied to their projects.
- Including a patient/family partner is mandatory. It will help you keep your project tuned to patients' needs and will give you an additional edge (proposals are reviewed by scientific reviewers and patient partner reviewers).
- The time spent on the project will need to be negotiated between staff applying for the Research Challenge and their manager.
- Complete the research proposal application form (with support from your mentor).
- Teams whose projects are selected will be supported with up to \$5,000 to conduct their research projects over an 18-month period.
- All team leaders and members will be required to complete on-line evaluation surveys.

¹ <https://bcsupportunit.ca/>

² Moss N, Daru J, Lanz D, Thangaratinam S, Khan KS. [Involving pregnant women, mothers and members of the public to improve the quality of women's health research.](#) BJOG Int J Obstet Gynaecol. 2017;124(3):362–5.

³ Merrill, K. C. [Is this quality improvement or research?](#) American Nurse Today. 2015; 10(4).

When is the training stage of the competition (online course and webinars)?

The training stage of the Research Challenge goes from March to June 2024. This year, with manager support, webinars will be scheduled during work hours. These will cover introductions in: literature searches, research methods, and a research budget. Refer to the [timeline](#) for specific dates.

What is Patient-Oriented Research (POR)?

POR is about ensuring health research is conducted, with and by patients and involves active and meaningful collaboration with patients as partners in research. POR ensures health research addresses research questions and health outcomes that matter to patients and aims to improve health care policy, services, and practices.¹

What can be the role of patients in research?

Patient partners could partner in the research study in multiple ways. For example, prioritizing research questions, identifying relevant patient-oriented outcomes, collaborating as co-applicant in funding applications, assisting in interpreting study results etc. Active collaboration between researchers and members of the public and patients is now recognized as best applied clinical research practice².

What will the Research Challenge funding cover?

Research Challenge funds will flow only after your ethics application has been approved. Eligible expenses include:

- staff time to work on the project,
- salaries for research assistants and focus group leaders,
- transcription costs,
- consultant fees for data analysis,
- purchase of small equipment (less than \$100 usually)
- office supplies,
- conference fees (only if presenting),
- software and survey licenses.

It is expected teams will include a detailed budget in their proposal for funding. This learning will be provided at the budget workshop.

Do I need to have a mentor to submit a LOI?

You don't need to have a mentor to submit your LOI. You can approach an experienced researcher, or we can help you find a mentor once your LOI has been selected.

What is the difference between research and quality improvement (QI)?

Research and QI have different overall objectives and processes to achieve them. Some differences can be in how a QI vs a research project handles patient rights, privacy, and application of the results³. QI has a local scope; it aims to improve processes, practices, outcomes, costs or productivity through a specific intervention within an organization. QI uses the *plan, do, study, act cycle* to test a new process. Research is a systematic investigation of phenomena with the goal of generalizing findings. This includes:

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- (a) generalization of new knowledge that can be corroborated by accepted scientific methods of observation and inference and/or
- (b) generalization of findings outside of the existing practice to future individuals with the same characteristics as the study sample/population.

Researchers must follow strict policies, obtain consent from subjects, and report any deviation from the initial protocol. Researchers usually must obtain approval from an ethics review board before the project starts to ensure that the rights of the study participants are protected. Research can help clinicians to better understand phenomena they find in their clinical practice to test or design new innovative interventions.

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