



Request for Proposals in Vascular Cognitive Impairment

June 2008

Background

Stroke is a leading cause of adult disability in Canada. While our knowledge of stroke continues to grow, there is much that remains to be learned. In the last 10 years, brain imaging technology has shown that, in some cases, more frequent and mostly undetected 'covert' strokes may be affecting the brain's executive function, or cognition. Covert strokes result in subtle changes that become more apparent over time and affect how we process information, think, remember, plan activities and organize the day. People who have covert strokes are at increased risk for evident strokes and dementia. In light of this new knowledge, the Canadian Stroke Network (CSN), in partnership with the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada (HSFC), is issuing a call for proposals addressing the role of vascular disease and stroke in cognitive impairment.

About the Partners

The CSN is a Network of Centres of Excellence funded primarily by the federal government. The goal of the CSN is to reduce the impact of stroke on the lives of Canadians through collaborative research, knowledge translation, and capacity-building. For more information about the CSN, please visit: www.canadianstrokenetwork.ca

HSFC, a volunteer-based health charity, leads in eliminating heart disease and stroke and reducing their impact through the advancement of research and its application, the promotion of healthy living, and advocacy. For more information about HSFC, please visit: www.heartandstroke.ca

Scope of Interest

Proposals should be innovative, multi-disciplinary and have the potential of having a significant impact on the scientific field or in clinical practice. In particular, projects addressing the topics below are encouraged:

Topics of focus:

- Epidemiological or surveillance studies related to the scope and scale of the issue
- Animal models that can be used to assess etiology, progression, or potential therapies related to covert strokes and cognitive function
- Understanding cognitive impairment at the vascular and mechanistic level
- The relationship between brain small vessel disease, covert strokes and other conditions such as Alzheimer's disease
- Imaging techniques assessing changes in brain morphology associated with vascular cognitive impairment
- Proof-of-concept trials aimed at therapy, rehabilitation or improving the clinical diagnosis or care of patients affected by small vessel disease or cognitive deficits
- While all of the topics of focus will be eligible for funding, it should be noted that HSFC's particular scope of interest is projects with a clinical, health systems, or population health focus. Therefore, HSFC's financial contribution will be directed towards such projects.



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Proposals are being sought for the two-year period starting April 1, 2009 to March 31, 2011. Project budgets should typically not exceed \$500,000 over two years. The call for proposals includes two steps: registration (by Friday September 26, 2008) and the submission of a full proposal (by Friday, November 14, 2008).

Registration: Due September 26, 2008

The purpose of proposal registration is to ensure that the CSN and HSFC can suggest potential synergies among the proposals, and there is an appropriate mix of reviewers to review the full proposals. Proposals will not be formally reviewed at this stage. Please register by sending an e-mail directly to Robin Millbank, CSN Network Coordinator: robin@canadianstrokenetwork.ca. Please include:

- The project title
- The Project Leader's name, title, institution, and e-mail address
- A short paragraph describing the purpose of the project

Full Proposals: Due November 14, 2008

An external panel will review all proposals, with at least three reviews per proposal. The Review Panel will combine scientific experts with advisors who understand the broad strategic goals of the CSN and HSFC. All reviewers will be asked to declare any conflicts of interest and, if required, new reviewers will be assigned. The names of the Review Panel members will be made available to all applicants once the review is complete.

Reviewers will be asked to evaluate the proposal based on the following criteria:

- Whether the research objective will effectively address the topics of focus (listed in the background section)
- Whether the proposals effectively build on existing research (if applicable)
- Whether the project will significantly advance our understanding of small vessel disease, covert strokes and vascular cognitive impairment or will result in changes in clinical practice
- Whether the project team is multidisciplinary, consists of the appropriate skills or knowledge, and provides development opportunities for trainees (if appropriate)
- Whether sources of partner funds have been identified (preferred but not required)

Once the review panel has reached consensus on its scores and HSFC has conducted a relevancy review, CSN management will propose a final list of projects to the CSN Planning and Priorities Committee (consisting of Theme leaders). **Investigators will be notified of the outcomes in March 2009.**



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Proposals should be a maximum of 15-pages long, including appendices, figures, and graphs. The project budget, signature pages, and references are not included in the 15-page limit. Please use a font size of at least **11 points**. Proposals should be structured as follows:

1. Project Title

2. Project Team

Please complete a table similar to that requested for the Letter of Intent. Do not provide full CVs.

3. Project Summary

Please complete a table similar to the example below (adding more rows as necessary).

Name	Title & Department	Institution	e-mail	Project Role*

*Roles include:

Project Leader (PL): One or two people responsible for managing the project. Project Leaders must be employed or hold academic status at a university, hospital, or institute eligible to receive research funds from CIHR.

Principal Investigator (PI): Researcher who receives CSN funds for the project. PIs must be employed or hold academic status at a university, post-secondary educational institution, hospital, or institute eligible to receive research funds from CIHR.

Collaborator (C): Investigator who makes a significant contribution to the project but does not qualify as a PI or will not be directly leading components of the project.

Highly Qualified Personnel (HQP): HQP are postdocs, trainees, students, technicians, programmers, research associates or other personnel who will be involved in the project.

4. Approach

Please describe the research objective and how it addresses the topics of focus, the methodology, how this project builds on existing research (if applicable), and how the results of the project will be translated into significant changes in our knowledge of this area or in clinical practice.

5. Budget

Please use the spreadsheet provided for the project budget. Please note that there is one worksheet for the total budget, but a separate worksheet should be completed for every Principal Investigator receiving funds. The budget should articulate both the level of funds requested and funds expected from other partner contributions. Please send the completed budget to the CSN by e-mail with your proposal. Do not convert the spreadsheet to a PDF format (keep it in its original Excel format).



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Please keep in mind the following limitations placed on project budgets:

- A maximum of \$25,000 per year per graduate student
- A maximum of \$45,000 per year per post-doc
- A maximum of \$25,000 per year in materials per investigator (except where justified)
- A maximum of \$65,000 per year for professional assistants (e.g. project management support)
- No travel expenses (other than required for research purposes). The CSN sets aside funds for investigator meetings and organizes these upon request.

6. Signature Page

Please use the attached template to collect signatures from Project Team Leaders, Principal Investigators and Collaborators confirming their agreement to participate in the research as described in the proposal. Completed signature pages may be converted to PDF and included in the application or faxed to the attention of Robin Millbank at (613) 562-5631.