Branch Out
Neurological Foundation

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Frequently Asked Questions

What Type of Research is my Project?

Basic: This type of research explores a natural phenomenon and makes discoveries (often called basic research/science). Foundational research guides translational research by providing a better understanding of the phenomenon that is dysfunctional in various conditions.

Branch Out firmly believes in the value of basic research. However, as we are dedicated to funding neuroCAM research, we want to ensure that a foundational research application has the potential to support neuroCAM. This rationale should be made clear in your application. Please be specific how a SPECIFIC foundational project could inform a SPECIFIC neuroCAM treatment for a specific disorder (or family of disorders). Simply saying "This research will enable a better understanding of X and potentially lead to the development of treatments" is NOT sufficient. Please be creative in what the impact of your work could be, as it is this innovative spirit that helps foundational research make the leap from the bench to the bedside.

Translational: This type of research what has been previously executed in the lab and makes it useful for people in everyday life. Within clinical contexts, translational research explores why and how interventions work, as well as how certain properties of the body could be leveraged towards developing a treatment.

If your research involves expanding the impact of known findings, figuring out the "how and why" of an intervention, better understanding the nature of a disorder such that it could be treated, or "proof of concept" treatment studies, it would be considered translational.

Clinical Trial: This type of research is a formal tests to determine the efficacy of an intervention on a disorder, usually involving collaboration between a research team and practicing clinicians. To be considered a clinical trial, a project must be done with patients and have some sort of experimental control.

More than one? As much as research typically flows from the bench to the beside, neuroCAM research often involves taking what is currently at the bedside and examining it under on the laboratory bench. Many of our most celebrated projects have contained more than one type of research, and it is ok to emphasize that in your application. What is better than knowing if a neuroCAM treatment works? Knowing why it works as well. Does your translational project also have a basic science component? Good science is often more than one type of research, however it must be

evident in your application how your project contains each element. Please consider the nature of your project carefully to ensure that your application accurately and fully represents its features.

What Modality of NeuroCAM does my Project fall under?

Neutraceutical: This modality investigates the effects of nutrition and naturally occurring substances on the nervous system. If your research is exploring the beneficial or harmful effects of specific naturally occurring substances (e.g. cannabinoids, curcumin) or dietary practices (e.g. ketogenic diets, effects of high sugar diets) on the nervous system as a possible treatment, it would be neutraceutical research. Examples of this modality: ts, , etc.).

Mind and Body: This modality explore the relationship between psychological processes, behavioural tendencies/lifestyle factors, and changes in the periphery (non-CNS) to changes in the CNS (also called behavioural medicine). All mind-body modalities take advantage of these principles, often changing the way that information in the CNS is processed, to promote wellness. If your research is exploring the therapeutic effects of certain mental behaviour (e.g. mindfulness, cognitive rehabilitation), lifestyle factors (e.g. sleep habits or physical activity tendencies), or the effects of a specific type of physical process (e.g. yoga, innovative physical rehab) it would be considered a mind and body modality.

Personalized Therapies: This modality explores why and how treatment effectiveness varies between individuals (also called precision medicine or individual differences research). If your research could inform why one therapy may work for one type of people, but not another or help predict treatment outcomes it would be considered of the personalized therapy modality. Additionally, research that involves the development of novel assessment and measurement techniques to better understand the effects of other treatments would be considered a type of personalized therapy insofar as it could be used clinical practice.

NeuroCAM Tech: This modality involves the utilization and development of technology to assess and manage disorders, as well as offer innovative non-pharmaceutical ways to deliver holistic treatments. If your research involves using technology to enhance existing therapies (e.g. computer assistant treatment planning, virtual psychotherapy), as its own method of intervention (e.g. transcranial magnetic stimulation), or as a way to monitor disease progression (e.g. technology that increases the feasibility of laboratory biomarkers for common clinical practice), then it would be considered neuroCAM tech.

What makes a good background?

Our SRP has a general education in neuroscience and healthcare, but likely does not know the relevant literature of your project. A well written background section should briefly introduce the general problem and the relevant specific ideas to appreciate how you propose to address it. Please avoid extensive reporting and discussion of theories that are not critical to understanding your project. At the end of your background, it should be clear what the goals of your project is and why it is an innovative or essential study for your field. In general, we value a concise background that conveys all of the important information, without superfluous detail.

What makes a good methods section?

We want to see that you have a well thought out study design that has mitigated possible confounds and logistical concerns. Your methods section should contain enough detail to highlight a well thought-out study design that is either supported by current practices in your field, or an innovative approach that addresses limitations of current practice. Please do not go into extensive technical details of your methods that don't highlight the above points. Unless those technical points are critical to the innovativeness in your project, they are more likely to obscure afore mentioned details than clarify them.

What makes a good hypotheses section?

We want to see that you have clear hypotheses that follow from the background section and are testable using the proposed methods. It should be clear how specific measures and procedures in your methods section will be used to elucidate the relationship between the variables of in your study. Just a friendly reminder, hypotheses are testable statements, not open ended questions. We acknowledge that science is often exploratory in nature, but well-designed studies should propose at least some specific relationships to test.

What do you mean by "Academic Impact?"

If your project were to be published, why would other people in a similar line of research find the results interesting or exciting? This is contrasted with non-academic impact, which is why a lay audience should be excited about your project. Please emphasize the scientific value of your project.

What makes a good relevance to neuroCAM section?

Sometimes it is clear that a project is neuroCAM (e.g. a study is testing the effects of nutrients in broccoli on seizures). In the case that it is not clear, please highlight how your project contains principles and methodology from neuroscience, as well as a

relationship to a neuroCAM modality. This section should clearly indicate why Branch Out specifically would want to fund your study as opposed to another major funding body.

What do you mean by impact outside the academic community?

Scientists in your field would likely find your project interesting, but what about everyone else? What impact does your research have on a person afflicted with a particular condition? Does your research help the loved ones of an afflicted person understand what they are going through? Does your research suggest any possible changes to current policy in schools, hospitals, or law? Could your research potentially be commercialized to increase the quality of life of a community of people? How does your research promote brains at their best?

What makes a good Lay abstract?

Branch Out values knowledge translation to a general lay audience. Our grants are almost exclusively funded through donations and donors enjoy hearing about the research their hard work had supported. How would you explain your project such that one of our donors without a general background in science could appreciate its importance? Successful knowledge translation involves some loss of detail and instead emphasizes the impact of your project on the more broad community. Technical jargon is the enemy of successful knowledge translation; nothing loses the interest of a lay person faster than hard to pronounce words, acronyms, and terms that require an explanation.

Questions?

Please ask Ty at research@branchoutfoundation.com