META**DAC** NEWSLETTER

Events

METADAC @ Festival of Genomics
29 & 30 January 2020
Register here

HOLD THE DATE!
Workshop for Data-Users
METADAC, CLOSER & UKDA
2 April 2020, Wellcome Trust, London

Approved Projects

In the past quarter METADAC has made 40 access decisions.
These included more than 10 conditional approvals and 15 final project approvals.

Recruitment

METADAC is currently seeking applications for new committee members.
Vacancies exist in the following areas of expertise:

- Genetic/biomedical science
- Clinical expertise
- Socio-legal expertise

METADAC membership

Plain Language Summaries: the importance of understanding research

Communicating clearly and effectively is an important part of responsible research practice. The METADAC plain language summaries help ensure that everyone can readily understand the value longitudinal data for scientific discovery.

In METADAC applications, a plain language summary (sometimes called a lay summary) is a 150-word description of a research study that provides a brief but informative overview of the work being proposed. Critically, it uses language that can be understood by non-expert readers, including a reasonably knowledgeable 12-year-old child.

The Plain Language Summary is a brief but informative account. Assessing the plain language summary is a fundamental step in the application process – to clearly communicate with the multidisciplinary METADAC Committee as well as participants, publics, funders, media and others. A clear Plain Language Summary is a condition of Tissue Bank Approval (ethical approval) for biobank resources.

Many researchers find it a challenge at first to write using accessible language. Only rarely are the summaries in METADAC applications appropriate for immediate approval. Turning technical thoughts into plain language is not a skill routinely taught in academic settings, though it is nevertheless one many researchers possess; as demonstrated when they talk engagingly and effectively about their work at public events.

The METADAC Plain Language Summary guidelines are critical to the METADAC application process. The guidelines explain that a PLS should describe how data or samples accessed from one or more of the METADAC studies will contribute to the proposed research. The guidelines caution applicants to ensure their PLS is consistent with the more technical scientific description also required on the application form. The latter forms part of the formal agreement for releasing data once an application has been approved. The guidelines also cover how to make the PLS readable and interesting, such as through the use of simple words and sentences as well as highlighting the potential value of the research.

The plain language summary has a life beyond access decision making. For every project approved by METADAC, the PLS is posted publicly on the METADAC website, where it remains even after a study has been completed. Potential funders, other researchers, study participants, media and others can all read the PLS to see what work has been completed in the past. A list of plain language summaries is also regularly circulated to the METADAC studies and their funders to illustrate the range of uses data and samples.

Next Committee Meetings

14 January 2020
25 February 2020
1 April 2020

For application deadlines please visit our website

E·S·R·C
ECONOMIC & SOCIAL RESEARCH COUNCIL

W
wellcome

MRC
Medical Research Council

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