



****CFN is providing early notice of a rapid request for proposals to investigate the intersection between frailty and COVID-19 – Official launch and final details will be posted on April 2nd, and hence the information provided below is subject to change. We thank our network members for their insights in planning this competition.***

***Request for Proposals (RFP)
Frailty and COVID-19***

Purpose

The Canadian Frailty Network (CFN) is looking to fund proposals aimed at investigating the interaction between frailty and COVID-19. Older adults living with frailty are the most vulnerable to COVID-19. As a result, CFN is looking for health, social or policy research studies that investigate determinants of increased susceptibility, and solutions to mitigate or prevent the differential risk to COVID-19. See below for specific proposal details.

Background

The mission of the CFN is to improve care for older adults living with frailty and to support their family and friend caregivers. We do this by increasing recognition, understanding and assessment of frailty, increasing evidence for improved decision making, advocating for improvements to health and social care, educating the next generation of care providers and by engaging with older adults and their caregivers.

The World Health Organization has officially declared COVID-19 a global pandemic. Most people will not become seriously ill when exposed to the virus. However, 15 to 20 per cent may require hospitalization. However, older people with co-morbidities and likely frailty are those at highest risk of mortality and adverse outcomes.

Proposal Details

Two Streams of Funding: CFN is looking for health, social or policy studies that fall under one of the two following streams of research:

1. Proposals that study the differential impact of frailty on the response or outcomes of a therapy or add a frailty cohort/subgroup to an existing ongoing COVID-19 investigation.
Example: People living with frailty are added as a sub-group an ongoing clinical study evaluating a COVID-19 therapeutic or diagnostic test.
2. Original research proposals that investigate the outcomes and underlying mechanisms for the observed outcomes, the utility of frailty as a prognostic factor, complexities of care, unique challenges for adults living with frailty and COVID-19 infection.

Areas of High Interest: Proposals can be observational or interventional health, social or policy studies. Proposals can involve one or more care settings (acute care, community/home care or residential/long-term care).

Examples of COVID-19 questions that may be addressed within a proposal include one or more of the following:

- **Health or social care questions that directly address older adults living with frailty include:**
 - Is there a difference in the rate of infection to COVID-19 in frail vs non-frail individuals?
 - Is there a difference in the clinical characterization and management of COVID-19 in frail vs non-frail patients?

- What are the short and anticipated long-term health implications for frail individuals that survive COVID-19?
- What factors should be considered when developing and evaluating diagnostic and prognostic tools for case detection and surveillance? Should frailty be considered in prognostic models?
- Are there unique considerations for the development and evaluation of potential SARS-CoV-2 vaccines in older adults with frailty? How does, or can we expect the immune response in older adults with frailty to influence the effectiveness of a SARS-CoV-2 vaccines?
- Are there unique considerations for the development and evaluation of potential SARS-CoV-2 therapeutics?
- **Social and policy questions that directly address older adults living with frailty include:**
 - How do local community programs assist isolated older adults living with frailty as a result of the social distancing policy? What improvements can be made to these programs and policies to better cope with a future event?
 - How do the local municipal, provincial and federal public health response and policies address the unique needs of older adults living with frailty? What are the positive and negative aspects and what strategies can be implemented to improve government response?

In keeping with CFN's mission, proposals must:

- focus on frail individuals and if appropriate assess frailty using validated scales or assessment tools.
- if appropriate include an evaluation (qualitative and/or quantitative) of program effectiveness.

All proposals must:

- be a maximum of 3 pages of narrative, plus a single additional page for budget and budget justification.
- include a narrative that provide study rationale and hypothesis, objectives and deliverables, study design and description of team expertise (i.e., partners, community members, other stakeholders etc.).
- be single spaced in Calibri 12 font with 1 inch margins.
- include at the top of the proposal: the name of lead investigator(s); title of proposal; length of study; and overall budget total.

Proposals may include appendices. Please note that reviewers are not obligated to review appendices and hence all applicants are strongly encouraged to include all pertinent information within the 3 (+budget) page proposal. The appendices can include:

- References and figures
- Short one-page CVs of Principal Investigators

NOTE: *The successful applicant(s) will be expected to work with CFN to finalize a co-designed study that will ultimately be funded. Successful applicants may also be asked for additional information and clarification regarding partners and community members and budget justification.*

Timelines

- Proposals must be submitted as a single PDF document by 8 pm EST Friday April 17, 2020.
- Proposals must be submitted via email to research@cfn-nce.ca. Emails date stamped after the deadline will not be eligible.
- All work arising from funded proposals will need to be completed by March 2022.

Budget

- A total maximum of \$300,000 is available for this entire RFP competition.

- There is no single proposal budget maximum. In other words, a single proposal can request a budget of \$300,000. Note that increasing budgetary requests will be expected to produce a proportionally greater impact and will undergo commensurate scrutiny as to the potential to achieve these impacts.
- One or more proposals will be funded depending on the budgets of the approved proposals.
- All CFN funding must be accompanied by applicant matching partner funds of at least a 1:1 ratio. To be clear, as an example, if you request \$100,000 from CFN you will need to secure an additional minimum \$100,000 in partner cash or in-kind contributions. Both cash and in-kind matching partner funds are eligible although cash contributions are weighted higher in proposal evaluations.

Specific deliverables required by CFN:

- Progress reports updating CFN on latest activities, preliminary findings etc.
- A final detailed report at project end date.
- A face-to-face or online meeting at project end date to discuss final results/findings.

Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation of submitted proposals may be conducted by internal and external (to CFN) reviewers. The mechanism of proposal evaluations will involve the creation of an evaluation rubric that will encompass how well the applications addresses the above requirements.

Terms and Conditions

By submitting a proposal, the applicant/organization acknowledges and agrees that CFN has no liability or obligation to any applicant/organization, except to the party (or parties) that is awarded the contract by CFN in its sole discretion. CFN shall be fully and forever released and discharged of all liability and obligations in connection with this RFP. CFN reserves the right to cancel this RFP at any time without any obligation or reimbursement to organizations.

Contact for Further Information

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