

27 July 2016

Health Research Strategy
Ministry of Health
PO Box 5013
WELLINGTON 6140

To whom it may concern:

Contributions to the public consultation for the New Zealand Health Research Strategy discussion document

This letter outlines the Society's role in funding research relevant to health. Attached also is a collation of views from some of our Fellows and Constituent Organisations in response to the questions in the consultation document.

One of the roles of the Royal Society of New Zealand is to provide funding to the research community on behalf of the New Zealand government. Under the auspices of the Marsden Fund, \$13.1 million of government funding in 2013-14 was distributed to research that had health-related themes. According to the Frascati classification, this research falls predominantly under basic research (60-75% basic; 24-27% applied; and, 1-3% experimental development).

It is likely that similar splits occur across other funding schemes offered by the Society such as the Rutherford Discovery Fellowships, the Rutherford Trust postdoctoral awards, the James Cook Research Fellowships, and, to a lesser extent the Catalyst Fund, so the Society has an important role in administering funds for discovery-led health research.

Further, the Health Research Council strategic refresh demonstrates that approximately 20% of its contestable funding is classified as basic research. Thus the funds that the Society administers contribute a significant and strategically important part of the total basic health research envelope.

The Health Research Strategy consultation takes the position that health research is a real priority for New Zealand and is something New Zealand does well. However, the Society's best estimate of historic health-relevant research and development expenditure shows that investment in health research in New Zealand is small in comparison to a number of other developed nations (Table 1). Note - health-related research undertaken in industry has not been considered here.

United States	Japan	Canada	Australia	United Kingdom	New Zealand
0.31%	0.37%	0.12%	0.28%	0.26%	0.11%

Table 1: Estimated publicly-funded health research as a share of GDPⁱ



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There are of course other significant avenues for health-related research in New Zealand, for example through the National Science Challenges and the Centres of Research Excellence.

With the recent boost of government investment in the Health Research Council contestable funding, it is hoped that the Health Research Strategy will provide the necessary guidance to identify how best to gain tangible outcomes and improvements in a number of health-related research areas. Within that, a robust amount of basic or fundamental research is vital in New Zealand to provide pathways and opportunities for creative ideas to flow and allow future translation to more applied outcomes for the benefit of all New Zealand.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A Cleland', written in a cursive style.

Andrew Cleland

ⁱ OECD database; Moses et al, JAMA. 2015;313(2):174-189. Reid et al, NZMJ, 2014, Vol 127 No 1389; UK Health Research Analysis 2014.