



2 April 2025

Dear [REDACTED]

**Freedom of Information request: FOI2025/00235**

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received on the 25 February in which you requested the following:

**Your request:**

*I would like to request the following information regarding public research funding for polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), endometriosis, and other women's reproductive health conditions:*

1. *Research Funding*
  - *The total amount of public funding allocated by the MRC to PCOS and endometriosis research over the past 10 years.*
  - *Comparison of funding for PCOS and endometriosis to that of male-specific health conditions (e.g., prostate cancer, testicular cancer) over the same period.*
2. *Research Priorities*
  - *The MRC's current research priorities for women's reproductive health, specifically related to PCOS and endometriosis.*
  - *Any recent initiatives or strategies designed to increase funding for research into conditions that disproportionately affect women.*
3. *Gender-Specific Health Research*
  - *Any reports or initiatives commissioned by the MRC regarding gender bias in research or the gap in understanding women's health conditions in the last decade.*

*If any of this information is already publicly available, please provide links or references.*

**Our response:**

I can confirm that UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) holds some information relevant to your request. Please see the information below.

**1. Research Funding**

Calendar Year	Endometriosis	PCOS	Prostate Cancer
2015	£1,042,799	£401,683	£1,729,722
2016	£2,895,162	£0	£582,045
2017	£244,622	£636,510	£313,973
2018	£0	£0	£6,100,597
2019	£669,194	£487,559	£1,208,141
2020	£0	£0	£885,320
2021	£4,101,153	£379,663	£714,332
2022	£831,960	£319,293	£2,404,327
2023	£0	£0	£655,545
2024	£0	£0	£0
<b>Total</b>	<b>£9,784,890</b>	<b>£2,224,708</b>	<b>£14,594,002</b>

The Medical Research Council (MRC) has allocated no funding to projects investigating testicular cancer during this period.

## 2. Research Priorities

The MRC is always open to and encourages high quality applications in any area of the MRC remit; such applications are typically submitted through “investigator-led” response-mode competitions for limited budgets. The MRC has not had any recent specific UK focused calls around women’s reproductive health. However, MRC is actively engaged in global initiatives, ensuring that women’s health is considered in addressing health disparities and promoting equitable healthcare on a global scale. Several previously funded global initiatives were relevant to women’s health issues, including the [Women and Child Health funding opportunity](#)<sup>1</sup>, which supported research related to topics including perinatal health and contraception. A cross-cutting theme and a significant part of the research portfolio at the [MRC Unit The Gambia](#)<sup>2</sup> (part of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine) addresses pressing research questions related with maternal, neonatal and child health.

Research proposals are invited for submission to the MRC to compete in open competition to ensure that we are using limited public money to fund the highest quality proposals towards impact on improving human health. The MRC would be supportive of an increased level of submissions in areas relevant to women’s health research.

## 3. Gender-Specific Health Research

As part of UKRI’s ongoing commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI), the MRC has been considering diversity in research. The MRC’s policy on [sex as a variable in experimental design](#)<sup>3</sup> was updated in 2021 to include expectations that researchers applying for MRC funding should specify and justify sex in the experimental design of grant applications involving humans, animals, and human and animal tissues and cells, and that the default position should be to use both sexes unless there is a well justified reason not to.

The MRC understands that research should be representative of society and there is a critical need to address health inequalities (greater diversity in data collections; equity of access for all communities to diagnostics, trials and treatments; the importance of understanding and tackling lifestyle factors that are linked to disparities in outcomes) and further research is needed to understand the drivers of these differences. In support of this, in 2023, the MRC issued its [embedding diversity in research design](#)<sup>4</sup> as well as [community resources to support diversity and inclusion in research](#)<sup>5</sup>. The purpose of this policy is to embed considerations of relevant diversity characteristics into the design and conduct of all MRC-funded research, and to ensure that the benefits and impact of these activities extend across all communities and populations. This covers research involving human participants and their data including clinical studies, public health and population-based research, and/or the use of human biological material (e.g. cells and tissues). The policy supports the government’s [Women’s Health Strategy](#)<sup>6</sup> including the ambition to address barriers that may prevent under-represented women from participating in research.

If you have any queries regarding our response please do let us know. If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review, explaining which elements of this decision you disagree with and why. Internal review requests should be submitted within 40 working days of the date of our response and should be addressed to:

Head of Information Governance

Email: [foi@ukri.org](mailto:foi@ukri.org)

Please quote the reference number above in any future communications.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20200923125716/https://mrc.ukri.org/funding/browse/grp/global-research-programme-addressing-the-health-needs-of-women-and-children-in-disadvantaged-populations-globally/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.lshtm.ac.uk/research/units/mrc-gambia>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ukri.org/councils/mrc/guidance-for-applicants/policies-and-guidance-for-researchers/sex-in-experimental-design/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.ukri.org/publications/mrc-embedding-diversity-in-research-design-policy/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.ukri.org/who-we-are/mrc/our-policies-and-standards/embedding-diversity-in-research-design/community-resources-to-support-diversity-and-inclusion-in-research/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/womens-health-strategy-for-england/womens-health-strategy-for-england>

If you are still not content with the outcome of the internal review, you may apply to refer the matter to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the review procedure provided by UKRI. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk).

If you wish to raise a complaint regarding the service you have received or the conduct of any UKRI staff in relation to your request, please see [UKRI's complaints procedure](#)<sup>7</sup>.

Yours sincerely,

  
Information Governance  
Information Rights Team  
UK Research and Innovation  
[foi@ukri.org](mailto:foi@ukri.org) | [dataprotection@ukri.org](mailto:dataprotection@ukri.org)

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.ukri.org/who-we-are/contact-us/make-a-complaint/#skipnav-target>