

I attach the response from the British Orthopaedic Association, prepared by Professor David Marsh with input from the Association of Professors of Orthopaedic Surgery and the British Orthopaedic Research Society, both of which are affiliates societies of the British Orthopaedic Association.

kind regards
Jean Goodman

British Orthopaedic Association

The Cooksey Enquiry

The Chancellor has proposed the merging of the funding streams to MRC and NHS R&D, creating one large pot of health research funding that would cover everything from basic mechanisms to clinical trials. It is felt that the underlying aim of speeding translation from bench to bedside is correct and laudable. However it is vital to retain the correct balance of spending on basic and clinical research, and we feel that there is a substantial risk that this would not be achieved. In particular, there is a risk that the MRC side, the basic scientists, would dominate, due to their longer establishment in the process of national peer review, to the detriment of clinical research and achieving that right balance. Furthermore, there ought to be a genuine difference in values between basic and clinical research, as to what constitutes excellence; a 'clinical RAE' might, for example, put greater weight on research output that actually changes practice. It is likely to be easier for government to control the balance between basic and applied medical research by retaining a high level split in the funding and allowing each arm to develop its own ethos and processes.

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