

Dear Sir David

You will receive many comments so I thought I would restrict myself to just one. The current funding arrangements have a major problem in that they tend to be intermittent which is very problematic for employing research staff. The requirement that each grant should have been shown to be productive inevitably means gaps between the completion of one grant and the submission for another. Publication often takes a year to 18 months. This means that after having developed a team of researchers and completing a project one then has to let them go and then start again a year later. This is an enormous waste of effort and resources. The solutions as I see are either to give 5 year grants rather than 3 year grants or perhaps better to ensure that each academic post in the UK is sported by a post-doctoral fellow or research assistant to allow continuity of research between grants. I think the episodic nature of funding is a major deterrent to young researchers in setting out in an academic career. Of course determined people will not be put off by these obstacles but I think you were asking for recommendations as to how we might improve things and encourage more people into research which is at present a major problem. I have personally supervised 14 people for higher degrees, and only 1 of them has chosen to go into academic medicine which speaks for itself!

Best wishes

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