PCORI Merit Review: Learning from Patients, Scientists, and other Stakeholders

October 30, 2013
Introductions: PCORI Moderators

- Lori Frank, PhD
  *Director, Research Integration and Evaluation*

- Laura Forsythe, PhD, MPH
  *Program Officer, Research Integration and Evaluation*

- James Hulbert
  *Pre-Award Manager, Contracts*

- Suzanne Schrandt, JD
  *Deputy Director, Patient Engagement*
Introductions: Panelists

- **Vernal Branch**
  - Patient Advocate
  - Public Policy Advisor, Virginia Breast Cancer Foundation

- **Julie Panepinto, MD, MSPH**
  - Professor of Pediatrics Hematology, Director, Center for Clinical Effectiveness Research, Vice Chair of Value, Department of Pediatrics, Medical College of Wisconsin/Children’s Hospital of Wisconsin

- **Gregory Sawchyn, MD, MBA**
  - President, Caduceus Capital, LLC and Senior Director, Clinical Guidance Councils for OhioHealth
Agenda

- Describe PCORI and PCORI’s unique Merit Review Process

- Learning from past reviewers: surveys, group interviews, review scores

- Panel Discussion with past reviewers
  - Question and Answer session
Background: PCORI and PCORI Merit Review
About PCORI

An independent non-profit research organization authorized by Congress as part of the 2010 Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA).

Committed to continuously seeking input from patients and a broad range of stakeholders to guide its work.
Why PCORI?

- Patients have questions that research can answer.
- People want to know which treatment is right for them.
- Patients need information they can understand and use.
PCORI helps people make informed healthcare decisions, and improves healthcare delivery and outcomes, by producing and promoting high-integrity, evidence-based information that comes from research guided by patients, caregivers, and the broader healthcare community.
Total number of research projects awarded to date: **197**

Total funds committed to date: **$273.5 million**

Number of states where we are funding research: **36 states** (including the District of Columbia)
Patient Engagement as a Path to Rigorous Research

Tell us what PCORI should study
Help determine what we fund
Tell us how we are doing
Help us share research findings

Engagement

PCORI Merit Review: Learning from Patients, Scientists and other Stakeholders
PCORI created **three categories of reviewers** to bring various perspectives to the review process. The reviewer committee will adhere to a **2:1:1** ratio meaning 2 scientists, 1 patient, and 1 stakeholder will be represented in each group.
Why Be Inclusive in Merit Review?

- Consistent with PCORI’s mission for research guided by patients and other stakeholders

- Consistent with the goal of funding research that is relevant to patients and their caregivers

More relevant research → More informed health decision making → Improved health outcomes
Application Submission and Merit Review Process Overview

1. Apply
2. Preliminary Review
3. In-Person Panel Review
4. Final Decision
Merit Review Criteria

1. Impact of the condition on the health of individuals and populations

2. Potential for the study to improve healthcare and outcomes

3. Technical Merit

4. Patient-centeredness

5. Patient and stakeholder engagement
Learning from Past Reviewers
Learning from PCORI Reviewers

- Reviewer surveys
  - Closed-ended questions
  - Open-ended questions

- Group interviews with reviewers
  - Discuss survey findings
  - Hear more about concerns and suggestions for improvement

- Review of merit review scores pre- and post-discussion
Cycle III (April – August 2013)

440 applications received

173 reviewers participated

52 projects funded for $96.2 million
Use of PCORI Criteria
How important was each of the criteria to your final scores? ... Impact of the condition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Scientific Reviewers</th>
<th>Stakeholder Reviewers</th>
<th>Patient Reviewers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Impact of the condition</td>
<td>47% 36% 14% 7%</td>
<td>50% 43% 7% 0%</td>
<td>51% 42% 6% 0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Very Important
- Moderately important
- Somewhat important
- Not at all important
How important was each of the criteria to your final scores? … **Potential for improving care and outcomes**
How important was each of the criteria to your final scores? … Patient-centeredness

![Bar chart showing the importance of criteria to Scientific, Stakeholder, and Patient Reviewers. The criteria are rated on a scale of Very Important to Not at all important. The percentages for each category are as follows:

- **Scientific Reviewers**:
  - Very Important: 71%
  - Moderately important: 28%
  - Somewhat important: 1%
  - Not at all important: 0%

- **Stakeholder Reviewers**:
  - Very Important: 98%
  - Moderately important: 2%
  - Somewhat important: 0%
  - Not at all important: 0%

- **Patient Reviewers**:
  - Very Important: 83%
  - Moderately important: 14%
  - Somewhat important: 3%
  - Not at all important: 0%

PCORI Merit Review: Learning from Patients, Scientists and other Stakeholders

Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute
How important was each of the criteria to your final scores? … Rigorous research methods

PCORI Merit Review: Learning from Patients, Scientists and other Stakeholders
How important was each of the criteria to your final scores?…Research team and environment

![Bar chart showing the importance of criteria to final scores for Scientific, Stakeholder, and Patient Reviewers.]

- **Scientific Reviewers**
  - Very Important: 50%
  - Moderately important: 43%
  - Somewhat important: 7%
  - Not at all important: 0%

- **Stakeholder Reviewers**
  - Very Important: 48%
  - Moderately important: 36%
  - Somewhat important: 16%
  - Not at all important: 0%

- **Patient Reviewers**
  - Very Important: 43%
  - Moderately important: 46%
  - Somewhat important: 11%
  - Not at all important: 0%
Challenges for PCORI Merit Review: Qualitative Findings

Need for more guidance about the meaning of criteria and use of a scoring scale
- “More emphasis needs to be placed on how to choose a score during the training.”

Time burden for review
- Too many applications to review
- Written critiques have redundant components
In-Person Panel
The chair(s) ensured that different points of view were heard

- **Scientist Reviewers**: 67% Strongly Agree, 21% Somewhat Agree, 6% Neutral, 5% Somewhat Disagree, 1% Strongly Disagree
- **Stakeholder Reviewers**: 79% Strongly Agree, 21% Somewhat Agree, 0% Neutral, 0% Somewhat Disagree, 0% Strongly Disagree
- **Patient Reviewers**: 74% Strongly Agree, 11% Somewhat Agree, 0% Neutral, 6% Somewhat Disagree, 9% Strongly Disagree
The scientific reviewers provided valuable input during the discussion.

- **Scientist Reviewers**:
  - Strongly Agree: 76%
  - Somewhat Agree: 18%
  - Neutral: 5%
  - Somewhat Disagree: 0%
  - Strongly Disagree: 1%

- **Stakeholder Reviewers**:
  - Strongly Agree: 83%
  - Somewhat Agree: 17%
  - Neutral: 0%
  - Somewhat Disagree: 0%
  - Strongly Disagree: 0%

- **Patient Reviewers**:
  - Strongly Agree: 80%
  - Somewhat Agree: 11%
  - Neutral: 0%
  - Somewhat Disagree: 3%
  - Strongly Disagree: 6%
The patient and stakeholder reviewers provided valuable input during the discussion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scientist Reviewers</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder Reviewers</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patient Reviewers</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Overall, scientific reviewers were receptive to input from patient and stakeholder reviewers.
Overall, patient and stakeholder reviewers were receptive to input from scientific reviewers

- **Scientist Reviewers**: 58% Strongly Agree, 7% Somewhat Agree, 6% Neutral, 6% Somewhat Disagree, 6% Strongly Disagree
- **Stakeholder Reviewers**: 83% Strongly Agree, 14% Somewhat Agree, 0% Neutral, 2% Somewhat Disagree, 0% Strongly Disagree
- **Patient Reviewers**: 80% Strongly Agree, 11% Somewhat Agree, 0% Neutral, 3% Somewhat Disagree, 6% Strongly Disagree
PCORI In-Person Review: Qualitative Findings

Mix of reviewers is unique and valued

- “It was very rewarding to be part of the process, and I truly believe it resulted in a more substantial and ultimately meritorious consideration of the applications.”
- “As a scientist, I have really learned from the other reviewers, both scientists and patient/stakeholders.”

Panels are well moderated by chairs for collegial, collaborative, respectful dialogue

- “This was the most positive, collaborative review process that I've participated (in).”
Challenges for PCORI In-Person Review: Qualitative Findings

- Continued need to promote equality
  
  “I think there was some amount of—even self-censorship on the part of patients, because they just felt like they didn’t have a right to their opinion, the scientists did.”

- Differences between scientific reviewers and patient/stakeholder reviewers
  
  - Perceptions that scientists, patients, and other stakeholders score the same proposals differently
  
  - Perceptions that criteria are valued differently by scientists, patients, and other stakeholders
My final scores were influenced by input from other reviewers
Change in Overall Scores: Pre- to Post-Discussion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change by</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Scientists</th>
<th>Patients</th>
<th>Stakeholders</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>≥1 point</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>0.311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥2 points</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Overall Impressions of PCORI Merit Review
Using a review panel comprised of researchers and non-researchers helped PCORI ensure that selected research proposals were both methodologically rigorous and important to patients and other stakeholders.
Are you interested in participating as a PCORI reviewer again in the future?

- **Scientist Reviewers**: 98% Yes, 2% No
- **Stakeholder Reviewers**: 95% Yes, 5% No
- **Patient Reviewers**: 94% Yes, 6% No
Conclusions

- PCORI has a unique approach to reviewing research applications
  - Inclusion of patients and other stakeholders intended to obtain and value a range of perspectives
  - Merit review criteria created to ensure research is methodologically rigorous and important to patients and other stakeholders

- Challenges with review criteria and with reviewer process are the focus of intense process improvement
Opportunities for Improvement
Summary of Improvements – One

- Streamline criteria
- Streamline written critique format
- Improve reviewer and chair training
- Initiate standing panels
Summary of Improvements – Two

- More clearly define reviewer roles
- Improve communications with reviewers and applicants
- Enhance mentor program
Panel Discussion
Panel Discussion

What are the benefits of PCORI’s approach to merit review?

In what ways should PCORI’s merit review be improved?

Are different reviewer perspectives elicited fairly through the process?

What are some of your most meaningful experiences as a PCORI reviewer?
Become a Reviewer of Funding Applications

PCORI invites professional and lay audiences to be reviewers of research applications.

Help us support research that will be both scientifically rigorous and truly patient-centered.

Learn more and apply online: www.pcori.org/getinvolved/reviewers
Training Webinars for Applicants, Dec 2013: http://www.pcori.org/funding-opportunities/funding-announcements/applicant-trainings/

Winter 2014 Applications Due: Jan 21, 2014

Spring 2014 LOIs Due: March 7, 2014

Opening a Pipeline to Patient-Centered Research Proposals webinar

November 13, 2013, 1:00– 2:00 PM (ET)
http://www.pcori.org/events/opening-a-pipeline-to-patient-centered-research-proposals/
Thank you!

Acknowledgements

- Scientist, patient, and stakeholder reviewers
- Reviewer panelists

Stay current with email alerts at http://www.pcori.org/home/signup and follow us on Twitter @PCORI

Please send questions or comments to:

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