

# Developing a European network - hints and tips for success



Cecily Begley

School of Nursing and  
Midwifery,  
Trinity College Dublin,  
University of Dublin



Sandra Morano

Scuola di Scienze Mediche e Farmaceutiche  
IRCCS AOU S. Martino IST  
Università degli Studi di Genova

# Overview

- Types of EU funding available
- Where to find details
- Contributing to discussions on future topics for EU funding
- Planning ahead, developing networks, creating fundable ideas
- Accessing the draft calls
- Preparing the bid: sources of support and tips for success.

## Planning ahead - developing networks

- (May be national research bodies offering grants to assist in developing networks)
- Need to do some networking (at conferences, at an ESF funded workshop, by preparing a COST network application).
- So – build contacts. ESF workshop is a great way to meet prospective partners.

# Planning ahead - creating fundable ideas

- Work on GOOD ideas – must be
  - Answering an EU problem
  - Achievable
  - Answering what is sought in the call.
- Can work bottom-up or top-down
- Both have advantages and disadvantages

**For example.....**

- 2011 call wanted projects on improving services through patient-centered care

## **For example..... (first draft, bottom-up)**

- We planned a lovely study on improving “patient”-centered care – putting in an intervention to improve how clinicians regarded women, how they would be informed and involved in their care, how they would feel cherished. Was to be evaluated by survey and interview to see how well the intervention worked – did the women feel better cared for, had the services been improved.

## **For example..... (first draft, bottom-up)**

- It was a lovely study but it did not really fit the call – we needed something that clearly demonstrated an improvement in services.
  
- Talked briefly about the problem of rising intervention rates, rising Caesarean section rates and increased maternal morbidity.

## For example..... (second draft, still bottom-up)

- Second draft: we chose an over-arching problem across Europe – increasing levels of maternal morbidity due to increased intervention in labour- and planned another lovely study on how to reduce intervention through “patient”-centered care – putting in an intervention to inform and involve women in their care so that they would advocate for themselves.

**...but....**

- ...the sample size required to show significance was too big, and couldn't be achieved in the time (4 years) or with the budget (3m)....
  
- ....and we had wasted 3 months.

## For example..... (third draft, top-down)

- Then I went on a training course.....
- We chose an over-arching problem across Europe - rising Caesarean section rate - and decided to do a study to reduce CS rate through "patient"-centered care – putting in an intervention to inform and involve women in their care so that they would advocate for themselves.

## For example..... (third draft, more top-down)

- Very quickly found (learning quickly here) that the sample size required to show significance was too big.

## For example..... (fourth draft, definitely top-down)

- We changed it to CS following a previous CS and worked on increasing vaginal birth after CS (VBAC) rates, which only required a cluster trial of 15 sites with 120 women in each – just manageable in the time and budget.
- That one won....

# Tip for the future

- Document a one-page proposal:
- One paragraph background, aim, purpose, EU problem to be solved.
- Outline of work-plan.
- Possible results.
- Impact on EU health.
- Future directions.

# Accessing the draft calls

- Ask your university research office to put you on the mailing list
- The draft comes out around February for a July call, and items in it can change (slightly) in response to feedback.

## Preparing the bid: sources of support and tips for success

- Go on in-house courses (Managing a Horizon 2020 budget)
- Ask your university treasurer's office if they have a Horizon 2020 budget template
- Set up an Excel file for the consortium budget

## Preparing the bid: sources of support and tips for success

- Ask your national Research Board for help
- Check national research websites – may provide support for co-ordinators (or team members)

# Hints and tips for Horizon 2020

- GET A GOOD TEAM!!!!
- Try a workshop or COST network to test the water and get to know people.
- Good if you have worked with some of them before

# Hints and tips for Horizon 2020

- Start work really early (March, for first stage submission in September)
- Start work REALLY early (a year before, a few different plans, tentative team, do a course)
- Start work REALLY, REALLY early (track record of workshop, COST, publications in the area)
- Three months' full-time work by co-ordinator (75% of the work-load) – PER STAGE!

- Read ALL the documents and highlight key points
- Go on a training course
- Get national/local funding to assist (travel for meetings, staff, consultants to read your drafts)
- Ask colleagues' advice

## Planning (broad)

- Aim to submit two weeks early
- Register EARLY on participant portal (all participants)
- Get each participant to check their details EARLY

# Planning (focussed)

- Plan who will do what sections – set deadlines
- Agree Work-Package titles and Leaders, and format for WPs
- Set deadlines for WPs – leave plenty of time for polishing
- Need budgets agreed before budget section can be written, so get them agreed early.

# Literature review, impact sections etc

- Use EU documents, NOT local or even national
- White papers, EU policy docs, PERISTAT etc
- EU impacts, NOT individual countries – no-one cares

# Details, details, details

- Everything must conform to the requirements – font size, refs, format, sections, number of pages
- Presentation is very important.
- Catching their attention in the first paragraph is very important
- Sell the whole proposal in the first page

# No magic formula...

- ...just hard work
- BUT – easier to get a win than national funding, which can be biased

# Wish You a Good luck



## Nascita di un progetto

Un gruppo europeo di operatori composto da ostetriche, epidemiologi, antropologi, sociologi, ginecologi, viene invitato a Dublino nel Marzo 2010 per partecipare al Workshop "Promoting Normality in Childbirth"

A un anno di distanza (luglio 2011) dell'iniziativa viene chiesto agli stessi operatori di suggerire un tema per uno studio europeo sulla promozione della normalità della nascita

Il project team include 12 partners da 8 paesi, rappresentati da consumatori, ostetriche, ginecologi, epidemiologi, sociologi, bioeticisti, economisti della sanità e dell'industria.

# Promuovere la normalità : non solo uno studio randomizzato

- Un programma innovativo di strategie prenatali evidence based,incentivi e interventi per aumentare l'empowerment e il coinvolgimento di donne con un previo TC

# Le donne al centro

- L'intervento evidence based proposto coinvolge operatori, donne ( e partners) in una triangolazione che può incoraggiare la pianificazione comune delle cure attraverso:
  - Informazione prenatale e counselling con ostetriche e ginecologi rivolta alle donne con un previo TC
  - Sviluppo di gruppi di sostegno(CoPs): gruppi di donne e clinici insieme per promuovere la comprensione dei rispettivi punti di vista

- Questo programma sosterrà le donne in collaborazione con gli operatori con l'obiettivo di aumentare la % di VBAC dal 33 al 53%
- L'efficacia clinica dell'intervento sarà provata attraverso un trial randomizzato in 15 Maternità (sites) in 3 paesi con bassa % di VBAC ( Germania, Irlanda e Italia) in settings diversi: (small, medium e large units, in aree rurali e urbane), reclutando in ognuna 120 donne

# Audit sulla percentuale di VBAC nell'anno 2011

Nei paesi ad alto tasso  
di VBAC

- Svezia
- Olanda
- Finlandia

Nelle nazioni a basso  
tasso di VBAC

- Italia
- Germania
- Irlanda



Verrà condotta un'analisi dei costi, e il team interagirà con i politici per trasferire i risultati nella pratica

Il progetto Optibirth si focalizza sull'elemento ***“patient centered care and patient involvement”*** cercando di colmare il gap nella conoscenza basata sulla ricerca nell'ambito del coinvolgimento dei pazienti nelle cure alla nascita in Europa

# Modello dell' intervento (1)

**Focus Groups con donne, i loro partner, ginecologi e ostetriche**

-in nazioni con alta percentuale di VBAC 45-55% (Finlandia, Svezia, Olanda) con 2 gruppi di 6-8 donne e 2 gruppi di personale sanitario in ognuna di esse per un totale di 12 gruppi

-in nazioni con bassa percentuale di VBAC (tra 29-36% in Irlanda , Germania Italia) con 2 gruppi di 6-8 donne e 2 gruppi di personale sanitario in ognuna di esse per un totale di 12 gruppi



# Trial randomizzato in Italia Germania Irlanda

## ■Centri Italiani

- IRCCS Azienda Ospedaliera Universitaria
  - San Martino-IST Genova
- Policlinico S.Orsola Malpighi Bologna
  - Sant'Anna Torino
  - AOU Policlinico Bari
- P.O. Incurabili- Ospedale Evangelico villa Betania Napoli

# Modello dell'intervento (2)

1. Interventi antepartum focalizzati sulla donna per aumentare i tassi di VBAC e sostenere le donne.
2. Interventi focalizzati sul personale sanitario per aumentare I tassi di VBAC , sostenere le donne e le paure dei clinici.



# Modello dell'intervento (3)

**Sviluppo di sito internet e applicazioni per smartphone con dati di letteratura fruibili per donne, ostetriche e ginecologi**

[www.optibirth.eu](http://www.optibirth.eu)



**-Analisi dei dati del trial randomizzato comprensivi di valutazione globale del benessere materno neonatale**

**-Analisi economica**

**- Disseminazione dei risultati dello studio ed eventuale utilizzo dell'intervento in altre sedi**



# **Disseminazione dei risultati dello studio ed eventuale utilizzo dell'intervento in altre sedi**



# **Principali risultati attesi**

- L'atteso aumento di VBAC migliorerà il sistema delle cure alla nascita promuovendo il coinvolgimento dei pazienti nelle cure
- La riduzione degli effetti collaterali sulle successive gravidanze per la diminuzione dei TC potrebbe incoraggiare la natalità contrastandone il declino in Europa
- Minor morbidità, più salute nell'età riproduttiva
- Contributi agli standards nazionali ed internazionali

## **Minore spesa sanitaria**

se l'intervento sarà risultato di provata efficacia, permetterà di risparmiare 156m Euro da parte di servizi sanitari europei

## Il team Italiano

- Sandra Morano, md, PI in Italia
- Jane Nicoletti md, post doc
- Giuseppe Battagliarin , md, National OOL
- Fiorenza Cerutti , Maria Vicario, Marilena Mazzolani , Matilde Canepa, midwives, MOL
- P.L. Venturini, R.Calderoni, D. Labriola, md, OOL
- 7 midwives e 1 md con contratto co.co.co in totale sui cinque siti

# The OptiBIRTH project

# **Contract/Grant agreement number: HEALTH – F3 – 2012-305208**

- EC contribution: €2,999,546 Duration: 48 months  
Starting date: 01/09/2012 End date: 31st August 2016:
  - **Instrument: FP7-HEALTH-2012-INNOVATION-1 HEALTH.2012.3.2-1. Improving the organisation of health service delivery**
  - Co-ordinator: Professor Cecily Begley, Trinity College Dublin (TCD), Ireland

# Individuals, Societies, Cultures and Health (ISCH)

| COST Actions | Individuals, Societies,  
Cultures and Health (ISCH) | Actions |  
IS1405

- ***ISCH COST Action IS1405***  
**Building Intrapartum Research Through  
Health - an interdisciplinary whole  
system approach to understanding and  
contextualising physiological labour and  
birth (BIRTH)**

# Il team Optibirth



Grazie per l'attenzione