Standard Operating Procedures

6.0.1 New Study Ideas/Proposals

Version	V1.3
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Effective date	28/02/2018
Review date	31/12/2019

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Introduction / Background

Initial studies for the Palliative Care Clinical Studies Collaborative (PaCCSC), funded by the Australian Government Department of Health, were defined by the Palliative Care Medicines Working Group as priority medications for the generation of evidence into their net effect.

Additional new studies have come under the umbrella of PaCCSC where competitive grant funds have been secured to support the conduct of the studies.

PaCCSC now has a well-defined program of work across study phases and covering 6 symptom nodes (Guidance 14) to enable ongoing work to be planned and to build expertise. PaCCSC actively seeks ideas for new clinical medication studies from the palliative care clinical research community and commercial interests that are in line with the existing program of work, and the Collaborative needs a mechanism to provide direction in relation to:

- The assessment of new study ideas/proposals brought to PaCCSC; and
- The support structures available to researchers that (following acceptance of the new study idea/proposal) can be provided using PaCCSC' established clinical research infrastructure

Objective

This SOP describes the process all new study concepts/ideas will go through in order to proceed towards pilot or full study recruitment.

Scope

This SOP applies to all individuals and/or organisations who have expressed interest in developing or undertaking new clinical studies with PaCCSC.

Ownership and Responsibility

Responsibilities of the Lead Investigator (of the new proposed study)

- To develop the study concept and submit for evaluation to the PaCCSC Annual Forum or the PaCCSC Trial Management Committee
- To develop the draft protocol for the new proposed study and present for review to the PaCCSC Scientific Committee
- To develop the full protocol for the proposed study and submit for approval to relevant Human Research Ethics Committees (HRECs).
- To apply for competitive research funding

Responsibilities of the PaCCSC Coordinating Centre

- To assist with the development of the draft protocol and full protocol of new proposed studies by providing teleconference facilities and practical implementation advice as required
- To provide governance and operationalisation support for new proposed studies

Responsibilities of the PaCCSC Trial Management Committee

- To evaluate new study ideas/proposals
- To assist with the protocol refinement and development
- To provide guidance regarding investigator team members, and other issues where appropriate

Responsibilities of the PaCCSC Scientific Committee

- To review draft protocols for new proposed studies
- To approve protocols for progression to HREC

Procedure

All new study applications are made to the PaCCSC National Manager, using the New Study Proposal template (Template 31). PaCCSC undertakes to formally review applications for new studies twice per annum.

In line with the purpose and aims of PaCCSC, new study support will be considered for:

- Randomised controlled trials (RCTs)
- Small pilot studies for proof of concept (feasibility, safety, efficacy)
- Sub-studies embedded within a current study, that adds value to the suite of currently running RCTs

New studies that do not fit within the criteria listed and within the existing program of work are unable to be considered for support unless there are specific advantages to the larger PaCCSC community to move forward with a proposal.

Applications for new clinical research study ideas/proposals undertake the following staged process in order to be taken into pilot and/or subsequent Phase III clinical study development under the governance and management of PaCCSC.

1. Proposal

- Informal discussions of new ideas/proposals can be tabled at any PaCCSC Trial Management Committee meeting to inform the development of a concept or to formulate a trial development group which can progress a concept in preparation for formal presentation.

- The study concept is formally presented (15 minute presentation) at the PaCCSC Annual Research Forum or the mid-year Trial Management Committee meeting.

- Presentations are given by the Lead Investigator for the new idea/proposal.

- The new study idea is evaluated by the Trial Management Committee members using the New Study Evaluation template (Template 32).

- All new study ideas must achieve an average score of ~70 or above to progress to stage 2 of the selection process.

- The Lead Investigator is informed of the outcome of the evaluation by the Trial Management Committee by the PaCCSC National Manager.

Figure 1 below details the proposal and development process for PaCCSC new study ideas.

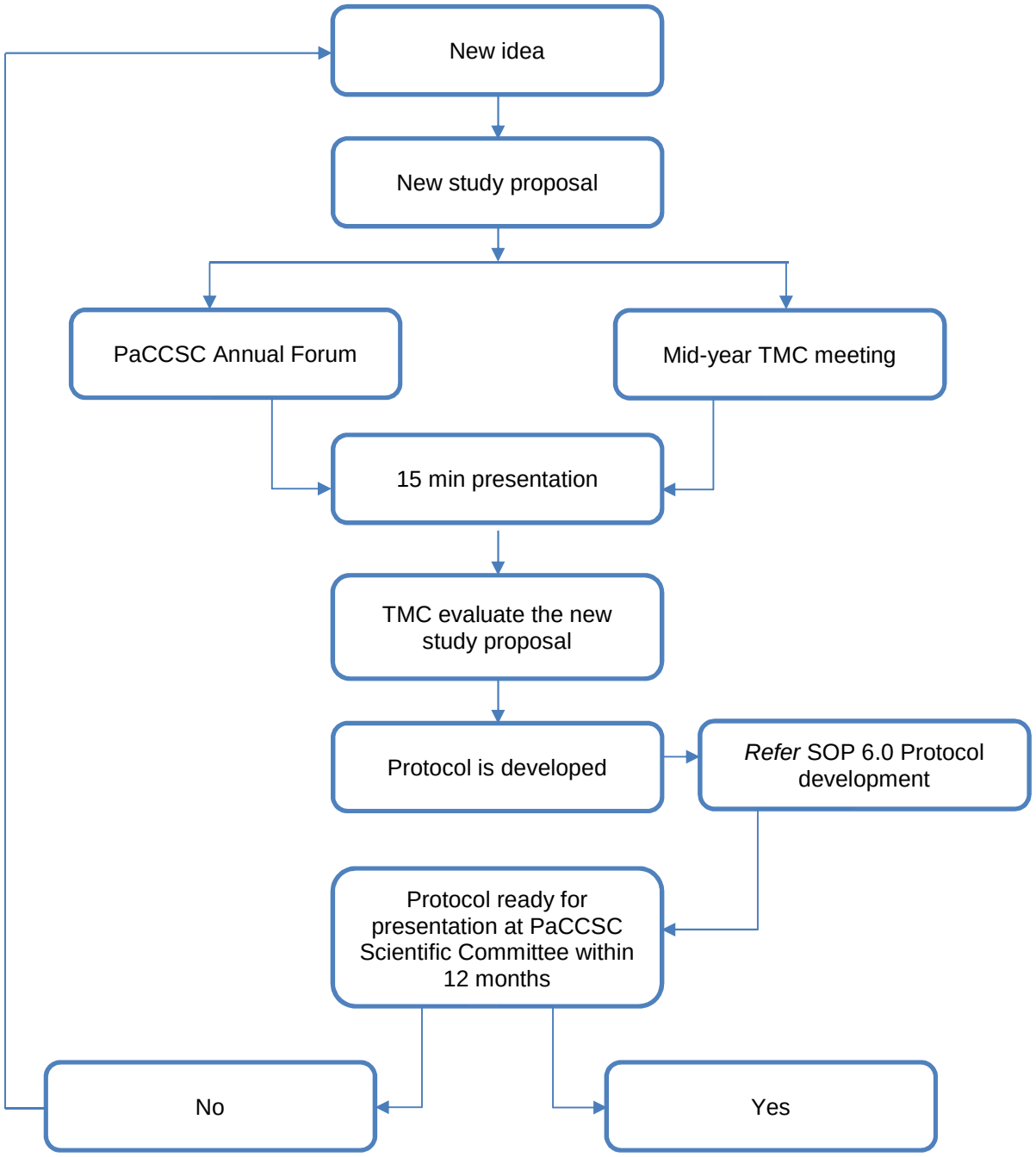

Figure 1 PaCCSC new idea proposal and development process

2. Development

- The Lead Investigator for the proposed study develops a draft protocol (*refer* SOP 6.0: Protocol Development) for the study on the appropriate PaCCSC Protocol Template (pilot or full Phase III study template).

- If the protocol is not developed and ready for presentation to the PaCCSC Scientific Committee within one year of the initial presentation to the PaCCSC Trial Management Committee, the idea goes back to stage 1 for re-presentation to the PaCCSC Annual Research Forum.

- Prior to presentation of the draft protocol to the Scientific Committee, a spokesperson, who is member of the Scientific Committee, is nominated to provide carriage of the study at the meetings of the Scientific Committee and if needed provide feedback to the study investigators. The member will continue as the spokesperson throughout the life of the study and/or their term on the Scientific Committee.

- The protocol is presented at the next Scientific Committee meeting (held twice annually), or if required can be reviewed out of session at the discretion of the Chair.

Figure 1 above details the proposal and development process for PaCCSC new study ideas.

3. Ongoing support from PaCCSC

- All new studies supported by PaCCSC are conducted under the direction of the PaCCSC governance framework.

- All new studies supported by PaCCSC are undertaken within the PaCCSC Standard Operating Procedures and other policy documents for the duration of the study.

- All new studies supported by PaCCSC are operationally supported by the PaCCSC Coordinating Centre.

3.1 PaCCSC Support Role (Collaborative Research Group / Sponsor)

PaCCSC is the Collaborative Research Group (CRG) / sponsor for all new studies (whether pilot or phase III) receiving approval from the PaCCSC Scientific Committee.

- PaCCSC acts as sponsor of the study for the purposes of the Therapeutic Goods Administration's (TGA) Clinical Trial Notification (CTN) Scheme or CTX Scheme (or any successor scheme) and is responsible for preparing and submitting all documents required by the TGA to file an application for initiating and conducting the study.

- The provision to each Principal Investigator, and (through the Principal Investigator) all institutions participating in the clinical study and the reviewing HREC, of all current and relevant information regarding the investigational product/study medication as reasonably required to justify the nature, scope and duration of the study.

- PaCCSC implements and maintains quality assurance and quality control systems with written SOPs to ensure that the study can be conducted and data generated, documented, recorded and reported. PaCCSC' assistance include data management, Case Report Form (CRF) development and review, data checking and study monitoring.

- PaCCSC designates appropriately qualified personnel to advise on study-related medical questions or problems.

- PaCCSC monitors the study and the application of the investigational product/study medication in PaCCSC sites throughout Australia and advises, via the Principal Investigator, all participating sites and TGA of the cessation elsewhere of any relevant trial, or the withdrawal of the investigational product/study medication from any other market for safety reasons.

- PaCCSC notifies all participating sites of any adverse events (including serious adverse events) that occur during the course of the study (either at the study site or other study sites, including overseas sites) which may require alteration of the conduct of the study, or which may affect the rights, interests, safety or well-being of study participants.

- PaCCSC facilitates cooperation between participating institutions and/or the reviewing HREC in investigating any adverse event (including serious adverse event) arising out of or in connection with the study.

- PaCCSC maintains insurance, or ensures that there is a named insurer for each participating site, with respect to its activities and indemnity obligations under any agreement.

Other related SOPs

6.0 Protocol Development

All PaCCSC supported studies are required to operate in accordance with the PaCCSC suite of SOPs and other work instructions and policy documents as developed by PaCCSC.

Other related documents

Template 31: New Study Proposal
Template 32: New Study Proposal Evaluation
Guidance 14: Symptom Nodes and Study Matrix

References

Nil

History			
Version	Date	Author	Reason
1.0	27/08/2013	L Devilee	To document the process and support provided by PaCCSC for new study ideas/proposals
1.1	9/06/2015	C Hope	Periodic review
1.2	13/08/2015	L Devilee	To clarify some minor discrepancies since development of the pilot protocol within the phase III protocol template
1.3	28/02/2018	B Fazekas, S Kochovska	Periodic review Publication of the ICH GCP E6 (R2)

Approval		
Version	Approval Name	Approval Signature
1.3	David Currow	