

IMPACT OF CUTS ON PRIVATE AND CHARITABLE FUNDING FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH



The Academy of Medical Sciences has warned that the UK's competitive advantage in medical science is reliant on a Government commitment to maintaining a thriving publicly funded research base. Any cuts risk damaging the UK's rich landscape of medical research funders and would jeopardise the private and charitable funding leveraged by public spending.

In a submission prepared for Government in the build up to the next spending review the Academy warns that it would be a mistake to believe that industry and charities could simply fill the gap if public sector funding were reduced.

Academy President Professor Sir John Bell said, 'Public spending on medical research leverages, rather than displaces private and charitable funding. During this time of economic uncertainty we must retain researchers and life science industries and ensure that medical research charities continue to invest in UK research. A long term commitment to publicly funded research is vital if we are to harness the competitive advantage previous investment has generated.'

Investment in biomedical science has helped the UK to create one of the most significant and productive sectors in the UK economy after financial services. In addition to public funding, each year medical charities invest £1.1bn

in UK health research and every £1 increase in public funding stimulates up to £5 investment into research by the pharmaceutical industry. As well as leveraging this increased investment, close funding relationships between academia, industry and the charity sector ensure that the outcomes of publicly funded medical research are quickly translated into actual health and wealth benefits.

The submission urges Government to make a long term commitment across the science base to retain increasingly mobile researchers and industries about the future of medical research in the UK. It recommends publishing a new science framework in the context of the current economic climate which should:

- Prioritise excellence.
- Safeguard the UK's world-class universities.
- Protect the autonomy of universities and research councils.
- Focus on reversibility to maintain capability to regenerate key areas when funding becomes available.
- Maintain and grow the essential partnerships between public, private and charity sector funders.
- Ensure limited funds are spent effectively by promoting coordination amongst funders and reducing unnecessary bureaucracy.

The spending review submission was accompanied by a paper detailing how biomedical research can be a platform for increasing health and wealth in the UK that was prepared at the request of David Willetts MP, Minister of State for Science and Universities. It highlights how if properly supported, medical research will create new jobs, catalyse sustained economic growth and help to restore public finances by improving health and making the NHS and public services more cost effective.

In response to the Academy of Medical Sciences submission to the 2010 Spending Review

Simon Denegri, Chief Executive, Association of Medical Research Charities said, 'With the support of the public, medical research charities put over £1 billion on the table for health research last year. Whether this investment will pay dividends for patients and their families will be influenced heavily by the decisions the government makes over the next few months. They must demonstrate that they share the public's vote of confidence in research with policies and funding for the long-term.'

Dr Liam O'Toole, Chief Executive Officer, Arthritis Research UK 'About 10 million people suffer from the many different forms of arthritis in the UK, and this number is increasing. For a rapidly growing charity such as Arthritis Research UK it is crucial that we are able



to plan long-term research. A joined up approach between Government, charity and industry over the last few years was just starting to make it easier to translate research ideas into benefits for people who suffer from arthritis. If the Government stops doing its bit now, this will seriously reduce the impact we can have on the 10 million sufferers of arthritis and their ability to be independent and actively contribute to society.

Dr Allison Jaynes-Ellis, Director of Medical and Innovation at the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry said, 'Last year, the pharmaceutical industry invested £4.3 billion in R&D in the UK to develop new medicines – we are by far the largest private sector investor. Every year, pharmaceutical companies decide on where they wish to

conduct research, and they are increasingly collaborating with academia. The UK must continue to be globally competitive to attract this level of interest, it must maintain public sector investment in science, and ensure that innovative medicines are valued appropriately.'

Dr Patrick Vallance, Head of Drug Discovery for GlaxoSmithKline, said: 'A strong science base takes years to build up – it's not something you can break up and then pick up again 5 years later. It takes a very long time to create the right environment, and to have sustainable investment. The UK's excellent biomedical research base is one of the reasons GSK locates around 40% of our pharmaceutical R&D in the UK.

'We know it will be a tough spending review, but we hope

the Government will focus funding on research in centres that are world class and further encourage collaboration with industry. The areas of real excellence do need to be protected for current research and also for the future generations of scientists.'

Jon Sussex, Deputy Director of the Office of Health Economics, said, 'Research by the Office of Health Economics and others has shown that public investment in medical research offers exceptional economic returns and stimulates additional R&D by the pharmaceutical and life sciences industry. Strong, sustained Government support for medical science is a very good investment, enabling the UK to benefit from the economic prosperity produced by this vital sector as well as from the advances in health care that result'

The Academy of Medical Sciences was one of seven organisations invited by Professor Adrian Smith, Director General, Science and Research, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills to provide advice on the science budget in the context of the spending review.

The independent Academy of Medical Sciences promotes advances in medical science and campaigns to ensure these are translated into benefits for patients. The Academy's Fellows are the United Kingdom's leading medical scientists and scholars from hospitals, academia, industry and the public service.

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SCIENCE, RESEARCH AND INNOVATION



The Rt Hon Dr Vince Cable MP, Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills and President of the Board of Trade
8 Sep 2010, Queen Mary University of London

Over the next few weeks and months, major decisions will be made on Government spending priorities as part of a wider move to stabilise the country's finances and rebalance the economy. They will help to define what we value as a nation and the direction in which we want to head. Investing in science and research is a critical part of that. I cannot prejudge the outcome but I know that my colleagues, including at the Treasury, value the contribution of UK science.

I have been arguing for years my concern over the way the British economy was distorted. Money borrowed for property speculation rather than productive investment and innovation. Too many top performing graduates heading straight for high finance rather

than science and engineering.

It was clear to me and my colleagues that the British economy was becoming increasingly unbalanced in the short term, as the mountain of household debt built up. We were also unprepared for a long-term future where we need

to earn our living in the world through high-tech, high-skills and innovation.

One of the unhappy by-products of the burst bubble, banking crisis and recession is a massive budget deficit that we inherited. As a consequence, we face the tightest spending round