

Request for Quotes (RFQ) to produce a historical overview of hypothesised causal mechanisms in mental health science

1. Background and summary

Numerous biological, psychological, and social mechanisms underlying mental health problems have been suggested over the past century. Some have been definitively refuted; others have simply fallen out of fashion; and some have been rediscovered and revived.

As part of Wellcome's mission to improve understanding of the aetiology of mental health problems, we wish to commission a Supplier to review—and provide a very high-level summary of—the **most influential clinically relevant biological, psychological, and social mechanisms** that have been proposed to explain mental health problems in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. This will enable us to contextualise current research efforts, to reconsider areas that might have been prematurely dismissed, and to inform our knowledge of theories that are being revisited by the research field. This contract call is open to Suppliers worldwide.

2. Scope of the work

This project covers early-stage depression, anxiety, and psychosis, with a focus on proposed biological, psychological, and social mechanisms. The Wellcome Mental Health team acknowledges the limitations of current diagnostic systems, and that definitions of mental health conditions and diagnostic criteria vary with time, culture, and geography. However, we also recognise that diagnoses have been a predominant way of organising mental health research over the past century. We therefore do not specify use of a specific diagnostic system or manual, but our focus is the broad spectrum of conditions encompassed by anxiety, depression, and psychosis (including OCD, PTSD, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and post-partum psychosis).

This project should focus primarily on theories which have been published in the medical and scientific literature. The resulting material might be organised by diagnosis or by mechanism, according to agreement between the Supplier and Wellcome as to which would be more useful and practicable. The Supplier will need to advise on what criteria they would use to determine what constitutes “medical and scientific literature” and “most influential clinically relevant...mechanisms”; for example, this might be related to number of citations on given databases, evidence of use in practice, or other criteria. The narrative of the development of

these theories should be put in the context of time and place, with reference to, for example, relevant non-medical and scientific sources. In particular, we are interested in how people with lived experience of mental health problems responded to the theories identified.

We welcome and encourage the inclusion of material from any setting that is relevant to our mental health funding strategy, and wish potential Suppliers to specify their geographical area(s) of focus and languages that they will cover.

We are also interested in questions concerning who has been historically recognised as a producer of knowledge, and why (for example, if and when lived experience has informed the development, or abandonment, of aetiological theories). We therefore ask for a brief outline of diverse systems of knowledge in addition to the main body of material to help Wellcome in the further development of its mental health programme.

Involvement of lived experience is an essential part of Wellcome-funded projects, and we would expect our Supplier to engage with individuals with lived experience of anxiety, depression or psychosis to help inform the design, implementation, and dissemination of the work.¹

We have set the past hundred years as the period of interest, but will consider shorter or longer periods, provided that the Supplier can make a case that this will be relevant to the goals set out in the **Background and summary** above.

3. Deliverables and timelines (12 months in total for delivery of all outputs)

A. Literature review covering the past century of aetiological theories in relation to anxiety (including OCD and PTSD), depression, and psychosis (including schizophrenia and bipolar disorder)

A literature review resulting in production of up to three separate academic papers (e.g. one paper for each of depression, anxiety, and psychosis) of an appropriate length (circa 4500w/100 to 150 references each) and publishable quality, accessible to a multidisciplinary readership.

B. Quick reference guide to major theoretical developments

¹ For more on lived experience involvement in Wellcome's mental health work, see <https://wellcome.org/news/lets-talk-about-lived-experiences-mental-health-challenges> and <https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLSKM2Zm6MngIRHU5mJRD3M5G3i4HbCYaR>

Refinement of material from deliverable A. into a format that can be used for quick reference (e.g. a knowledge map or a table; this may be digital/online).

C. Scoping of diverse systems of knowledge

Analysis of who has been recognised as a producer of knowledge in mental health science, and a brief outline of diverse systems of knowledge (e.g. not usually covered in medical journals) in the form of a report for Wellcome, max 3000w.

4. Budget

The budget available for this work is circa £100,000 GBP (which needs to include any VAT requirements – at 20% – if you are based in the UK; if you are not UK-based please allow 20% for reverse VAT charges that Wellcome will have to self-account for). As we are a charity, value for money in a proposal is important to us and will form part of our decision making.

5. Preferred timelines

The work will cover a period of up to twelve months, though we are happy to consider shorter timelines. Work will commence as soon as possible, depending on Supplier availability. The Supplier will be expected to meet with a member of the Wellcome Mental Health Field Building Team on a regular basis in person or online to discuss the progress and direction of their work.

6. Experience required

We envisage that one Supplier will cover biological, psychological, and social mechanisms thought to underlie early-stage depression, anxiety, and psychosis in their specific regional and cultural area of interest. This may be an individual or a small team. Suitable Suppliers might include those that draw on medical and scientific historians, clinicians and researchers with an interest in the history of mental health science, and science writers. While we do not stipulate any formal qualifications, Suppliers must demonstrate familiarity with the literature regarding the history of mental health science and practice, as well as excellent communication skills with diverse audiences. Suppliers are also expected to work with lived experience experts as part of this project; this can be either on a core team or as collaborators. If complementary applications are received, we may commission more than one Supplier.

7. Detail requested in the quote

Please provide a short (max 2-page) CV outlining relevant skills and experience and a 2-page proposal. This proposal should address the above deliverables, including in addition:

- Details of your chosen geographical area, languages covered, and time period, and reasons for this choice
- A proposed plan of how you would work with lived experience experts in this project
- An outline of your procedure for handling sensitive, controversial, and emotive material as part of this project
- A breakdown of costs, including the estimated time required to complete the deliverables
- An initial publication strategy for your literature review
- A list of any questions you have for Wellcome regarding this RFQ

Please note:

- Suppliers submitting proposals as a registered company should review [this document](#).
- Individuals submitting proposals as a sole trader (not registered) should review [this document](#).
- Individuals submitting proposals through their own personal services company should please highlight this to Wellcome.

Embracing diversity and inclusion is fundamental to delivering our mission to improve health, and we are committed to cultivating a fair and healthy environment for the people who work here and those we work with. As we learn more about barriers that disadvantage certain groups from progressing in our workplace, we will remove them. Wellcome takes diversity and inclusion seriously, and we want to partner with Suppliers who share our commitment. We may ask you questions related to D&I as part of our procurement processes

We would be grateful for your response to this RFQ by **17:00 BST on Friday, 21 October, 2022**. Please send your quote addressing the requested detail to RFP@wellcome.org. Please note, only questions from Suppliers we wish to take forward will be answered.

The single point of contact within this RFQ exercise for all communications is as indicated below:

Name: Olivia Donovan | Role: Procurement Officer | Email: RFP@wellcome.org