STEPCARE SUB-STUDY PROPOSALS GUIDANCE NOTES

Categories of sub study:

1. **Sub-studies designed prior to analysis of the primary data.**
    a. Studies based on data already collected in the study case report forms.
    b. Studies requiring additional data collection.
    c. Biobank sub-studies: Suggestions for studies based on the Biobank may be submitted, and the international steering committee will process these requests prior to locking of the database.
2. **Post-hoc analyses (designed after analysis of primary data)**
    a. Studies based on data that has already been collected
    b. Studies requiring additional data collection.

Instructions for sub-study proposals

All sub-studies proposals must be submitted in English.

We encourage sub-studies in category 1 to be submitted as early as possible to allow time for review and consideration of logistics.

All sub-study proposals should ideally be developed by the sub study Principal Investigator in collaboration with their National Investigator(s) or members of their National Investigator's team. The National Investigator will have a coordinating role for sub-studies from their region and liaise with the Trial Management Group of the STEPCARE trial.

The STEPCARE Trial Management Group will review all proposals and has an open and inclusive policy towards sub-studies providing two key criteria are met:

- The main trial is not adversely affected by the sub-study.
- The research question and methodology are scientifically sound.

To prevent potential bias in the sub-study results due to missing data, it is crucial that all reasonable attempts must be made to include all potential participants for STEPCARE and the sub study at a participating site during the recruitment period.

The STEPCARE International Steering Committee encourages the development of comprehensive protocols and statistical analysis plans that provide detailed, predefined

descriptions of the methodology. Additionally, they advocate for the publication and registration of these documents.

A synopsis of the sub-study should be provided in a 2-page document, inclusive of key references to support the sub-study.

Study synopsis 2-page document

1. **Title**
2. **Rationale for study with a clear statement of the Hypothesis(es)**
3. **PICO**
4. **Data requirements from study CRF**
5. **Additional data required:**
    a. **Logistics regarding additional data collection**
6. **Sample size/ power estimations**
7. **Statistical analysis plan**
8. **Lead Investigators**
    a. **Co-Investigators**
    b. **Participating sites**
9. **Funding**
10. **References**

Please submit all sub-study synopses to: stepcare@georgeinstitute.org.au

Additional notes on sub-studies

We anticipate, as with our previously conducted studies, that there will be many approved sub-studies. All approved sub-studies will be posted on the STEPCARE.org trial website under the sub-studies tab.

Funding, data-sharing agreements and ethical approval are the responsibility of the Principal Investigator of each sub study (depending on country and jurisdictional requirements); and should be carefully obtained so that there is no adverse impact on the main STEPCARE trials.

Part of the assessment process will focus on how additional data are to be collected for studies that require it. For some of the proposed sub-studies, it may be possible to develop an additional centralised database/online platform. This will depend on the timing of submission, proposed data, and resources.

For further information: https://stepcare.org/substudies