

Proposed changes to the constitution of the CMRS

The Committee of the CMRS proposes that the Constitution of the Society be revised and updated. These changes are largely minor and technical. Perhaps the only contentious suggestion is that of a change to the name of the Society.

A constitution for the Christchurch Medical Research Society was adopted at its Inaugural Meeting held on the 23rd of March, 1971. On the 27th of July, 1972, Professor Don Beaven successfully moved an amendment to make membership more inclusive (originally, it was restricted to university graduates). Subsequently, membership fees have been raised at various times to the current level of \$10.

I am not aware of other amendments to the constitution but it is possible that they have occurred. Thus it is suggested that following debate on any individual changes, the resulting document be adopted as a whole so as to tidy up any possible conflicts that may occur with any previous amendments.

1. It is proposed that the name of the Society be changed from the “Christchurch Medical Research Society” to the “Health Research Society of Canterbury”. The reasons for this include
 - (i) the wish to avoid the widespread and enduring confusion over the acronyms CMRS and CMRF, which is exacerbated by the now quite close working relationship between the two organisations,
 - (ii) the wish to reflect the general shift away from the term “medical research” to the more inclusive term “health research” which is more representative of the Society’s current programme (accordingly, other instances of the term “medical” throughout the document have also been changed to “health”), and
 - (iii) the wish to reflect the wide involvement of institutions across the region (the three universities, the hospitals, and various research institutes) rather than just those in the centre of the city.
2. The annual membership fee has been set at its current level of \$10.
3. The ambiguity as to what constituted a committee quorum has been removed.
4. The term “President” has been substituted for “Chairman” to make the document gender neutral [*That changed was defeated by a motion put at the AGM. The term Chairman was retained*].
5. The roles of the Committee members have been spelled out, including the splitting of the roles of the Secretary and the Treasurer.
6. Term limits have been altered from a maximum of two years to three years for the President, Secretary, and Treasurer. Three years allows more possibility of overlapping the terms of experienced and new President/Secretary combinations to provide more continuity in the running of the Committee.
7. Ordinary Committee Members have had their maximum terms extended from three years to an indefinite period. Reason: anyone wishing to put themselves forward for long-term service on the Committee should be encouraged rather than removed.

8. Provision for the conduct of Special General Meetings as required has been made explicit.
9. The requirement that only unpublished work can be accepted for presentation has been removed. This may place an unnecessary restriction on the communication of findings to which the Society's audience may not have been exposed. Publication of abstracts from such presentations is a separate issue.
10. The restriction of abstract length to 300 words has been removed. This is incompatible with the current NZMJ limit of 250 words and is the sort of operational matter that needs to be varied from time to time rather than enshrined in the Constitution.
11. The Constitution previously required depositing abstracts in the Medical Library, which has not been adhered to for some time. It may be more appropriate to have this as just one of a number of options for archiving the abstracts, with the preferred options being journal publication and web archiving. The terms of non-publication requests by authors are made explicit.
12. The Constitution previously made no mention of winding-up procedures, making it legal for the assets to be distributed amongst the members. It is now explicitly stated that funds should be given to another body or bodies with similar aims.
13. Minor typographical and grammatical changes were made throughout.

Below is the proposed constitution, followed by the existing one.

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Honorary Secretary,

Christchurch Medical Research Society

8th April 2005

PROPOSED CONSTITUTION OF THE CANTERBURY HEALTH RESEARCH SOCIETY

1. The **name** of the Society shall be the Health Research Society of Canterbury, formerly known as the Christchurch Medical Research Society.
2. The **objects** of the Society shall be (a) to provide a forum where excellent health-related research can be presented and (b) to promote and encourage such research generally.
3. **Membership** of the Society shall be open to all persons engaged in or interested in health research. Members shall be enrolled by personal application or by nomination to the Secretary. Final approval of membership shall be vested in the Committee.
4. **Annual subscription** shall be \$10.00 to cover the expenses of meetings and incidentals. This fee shall be fixed from time to time by the Society in a General Meeting and shall be in respect of the period from January 1st to December 31st in each year. The subscription shall be paid by April in any year.
5. Privileges extending to financial members include:
 - (a) Attending all meetings of the Society and voting on any resolution submitted to such meetings.
 - (b) The invitation of a limited number of guests to Scientific Meetings of the Society.
6. **Management** of the Society's affairs shall reside in a Committee consisting of the following members, all of whom shall be eligible for re-election. Election of Committee members shall occur at the Annual General Meeting. Wherever possible, membership of the Committee should be representative of the various institutions and disciplines involved in health research in the Canterbury region.
 - (a) The Chairman. The role of the Chairman shall be to chair all meetings of the Society and its Committee. The Chairman shall also represent the views of the Society and advance its objects by membership of or representation to other relevant committees or bodies as required.
 - (b) The Honorary Secretary. The role of the Secretary, shall be to arrange the meetings of the Society and its Committee. This shall include the circulation of meeting notices and minutes and the publication or archiving of the Society's proceedings. The Secretary shall also act as the Chairman's Deputy as required.
 - (c) The Honorary Treasurer. The Treasurer is responsible for maintaining the accounts of the Society, the list of financial members, and for seeking payment of fees.
 - (d) At least three other Ordinary members. The role of the Ordinary Committee members is to combine with the other members in the review of submitted abstracts and the general running of the Society's affairs.

All Committee members are subject to re-election annually. The Secretary and Chairman and Treasurer are eligible for periods of office not exceeding three consecutive years. Individual Ordinary Committee members shall serve for such periods as pleases the membership. An outgoing Chairman, Secretary, or Treasurer is eligible to, and encouraged to, seek immediate re-election as an Ordinary Committee member so as to retain corporate memory.

Decisions made by the Committee in regard to the Societies affairs must be agreed to by a majority of Committee members present. Three members personally present shall constitute a quorum.

The Secretary must send notice to all Committee members at least seven days in advance of any meeting.

7. At the Annual General Meeting, the Society may nominate a Patron or Patrons from time to time.
8. **The Funds** shall be vested in the Committee and be applied solely towards the promotion of the objects of the Society.
9. **Meetings** shall consist of (a) Scientific meetings to be held two to four times yearly, at the discretion of the Committee; (b) Annual General Meeting; and (c) other meetings as may be deemed necessary.

Scientific meetings will be preceded by a notices of meeting and a call for abstracts of papers prior to the date of meeting. The abstracts must meet publication requirements which may change from time to time and will be notified explicitly by the Secretary. Selection of papers to be presented at meetings shall be decided by the Committee. Copies of abstracts of papers will be archived in at least one of the following ways: (i) publication within a scholarly journal, (ii) permanent archiving in a website able to be controlled and maintained by the Society, or (iii) being deposited in the Canterbury Medical Library. Although presenters may request that their abstract not be published, it must be made available for perusal by members at the meeting.

Annual General Meetings shall be held at such time and place as the Committee shall in each year determine. The business shall be (i) to receive the Chairman's report; (ii) to receive the statement of Receipts and Expenditure; (iii) to elect officers and management committee; (iv) to appoint an Honorary Auditor; (v) and other general business. Intention to hold an Annual General Meeting shall be sent to each member at least 28 days prior to Annual General Meeting, including an agenda for the meeting. Matters requiring to be conducted at an Annual General Meeting may be conducted at an earlier or later Special General Meeting which must be called and notified in the same manner.

10. **Minutes** shall be recorded and kept by the Secretary of all meetings of the Society. They shall be made available to any member upon request.
11. **Alteration** of the Constitution may be made at any General Meeting, provided a quorum of financial members is present. For this purpose a quorum shall be 10 financial members of the Society.

Notice of intent to alter the Constitution must be sent to all members 28 days prior to Annual General Meeting or other meeting.

12. **Termination** of membership of the Society may be made at any time by notice of resignation in writing given to the Secretary. Termination may also be made at the discretion of the Committee should a subscribing member (i) be in default of payment of subscription 12 months after it is due, or (ii) attempt to frustrate the objects of the Society.
13. **Winding up.** Should the Society resolve to be wound up at a General Meeting, any funds or assets held by the Society shall be disbursed to other bodies whose aims are consistent with the Society's objects.

CONSTITUTION OF THE CHRISTCHURCH MEDICAL RESEARCH SOCIETY

1. The name of the Society shall be the Christchurch Medical Research Society.
2. The objects of the Society shall be (a) to provide a forum where scientific research related to medicine can be presented and (b) to promote and encourage such research generally.
3. Membership of the Society shall be open to all persons engaged in or interested in Medical Research. Following Foundation, members shall be enrolled by personal application or by nomination to the Secretary. Final approval of membership shall be vested in the Committee.
4. Annual subscription shall be \$1.00 to cover expense of meetings and incidentals. This fee shall be fixed from time to time by the Society in General Meeting and shall be in respect of the period from January 1st to December 31st in each year. The subscription shall be paid by April in any year.
5. Privileges extending to financial members include:
 - (a) Attending all meeting of the Society and of voting on any resolution submitted to such meeting.
 - (b) The invitation of a limited number of guests to Scientific Meetings of the Society.
6. Management of the Societies affairs shall reside in a Committee consisting of the following members, all of whom shall be eligible for re-election.
 - (a) The Chairman to be elected at Annual General Meeting.
 - (b) The Honorary Secretary, who shall also act as Honorary Treasurer and Deputy Chairman as necessary – also to be elected as above.
 - (c) Three other members, to be elected as above.

Decisions made by the Committee in regard to the Societies affairs must be agreed to by a majority of Committee members. Unless otherwise determined, three members personally present shall constitute a quorum. The Secretary and Chairman would be eligible for office for periods not exceeding two years. Committee members would be eligible for periods not exceeding three years.
7. At Annual General Meeting, the Society may nominate Patron or Patrons from time to time.
8. The Funds shall be vested in the Committee and be applied solely towards the promotion of the objects of the Society.
9. Meetings shall consist of (a) Scientific meetings to be held two to four times yearly, at the discretion of the Committee;

(b) Annual General Meeting; and (c) other meetings as may be deemed necessary.

Scientific meetings will be preceded by notice of meetings and call for abstracts of papers prior to date of meeting. Only unpublished work is acceptable. The abstracts must be typed and not exceeding 300 words in length. Selection of papers for Scientific meetings shall be decided by the Committee. Copies of Abstracts of Papers will be deposited in the Canterbury Medical Library.

Annual General Meetings shall be held at such time and place as the Committee shall in each year determine. The business shall be (i) to receive the Chairman's report; (ii) to receive the statement of Receipts and Expenditure; (iii) to elect officers and management committee; (iv) to appoint an Honorary Auditor; (v) and other general business. Intention to hold an Annual General Meeting shall be provided in written form, sent to each member at least 28 days prior to Annual General Meeting.

10. Minutes shall be recorded and kept by the Secretary of all meetings of the Society.

11. Alteration of the Constitution may be made at any General Meeting, provided a quorum of financial members is present. For this purpose a quorum shall be 10 financial members of the Society.

Notice of intent to alter the Constitution must be sent to all members 28 days prior to Annual General Meeting or other meeting.

12. Termination of membership of the Society may be made at any time by notice of resignation in writing given to the Secretary. Termination may also be made by the Committee should a subscribing member be in default of payment of subscription 12 months after this is due.