

Call for research proposals for funding for 2025-26 from IACTA members

Preamble:

The Indian Association of Cardiovascular and Thoracic Anaesthesiologists (IACTA), along with its academic wing, the Indian College of Cardiac Anaesthesia (ICCA), aims to promote and encourage research amongst its members. This will create an ambience of inquisitiveness and foster a culture of excellence. In order to promote such research, an extramural grant will be given to projects approved by the IACTA research fund board. The grant shall aid the principal investigators (PI) in meeting various expenses related to the project, and it is expected to improve the quality of the research project, for e.g., evaluating myocardial injury by quantitative analysis of serum troponin I, and its correlation with postoperative outcomes.

Procedure of grant from IACTA research fund:

Projects will be taken up round the year and should be sent to the member secretary IACTA research fund board i.e., the Dean Research, ICCA. Soft copy of the complete project proposal shall be sent by the PI to the Dean Research. This will be circulated to all members of the research board by the Dean Research. Decisions on the rejection or provisional approval of the project proposal will be communicated to the applicants within a period of two weeks from the submission of the proposal. PIs of provisionally approved projects will be asked to make a power point presentation of their proposed research before the research board in one of the scheduled board meetings, which will be notified in advance to the PI. The presentation shall include the background, hypothesis, aims and objectives, methods, statistical methods used for analysis, and the detailed analysis of expenditure for the requested fund amount. Proof of certificate of ethical clearance/waiver from their respective hospitals/institutes, or at least proof of application to the ethics committee should be submitted at the time of submission of the proposals. Based on the presentation and objective assessment, the IACTA research board will take a final decision and inform the PI.

In general, the following points shall be given priority:

- a. Originality/Novelty
- b. Generalizability, i.e., the findings should be applicable to a wide subset of patients.
- c. Importance of the research questions. Research addressing short term (30 days), mid-term or long-term outcomes are of greater value.
- d. Reproducibility of the methods- whether it is clear and can be replicated by other investigators.
- e. Statistical analysis- a clear statistical plan, including the tests to be used, and the sample size calculation based on the primary outcome is welcome. Projects which are submitted without a clear statistical plan will receive a low priority for acceptance.

- f. Randomized controlled trials will receive priority over prospective observational studies. However, if the research question in the prospective observational studies is significant, then such proposals will be considered favorably.
- g. Evidence of ethics approval and registry of the study in a public registry- All PIs are expected to submit proof of ethics approval/waiver and evidence of registration of their trial/study in a public registry (e.g., CTRI), or at the least, evidence of submission of trial/study to their ethics committee for consideration at the time of proposal submission. Failure to do so will lead to rejection of the proposal. This is part of ICMR good research ethics. Where the trial registry number is available, the same must be submitted along with the proposal, in order for the research board members to verify the protocol outlined in the registry.

Financial support by IACTA research fund:

The financial support by IACTA research fund will be maximum INR 2 lakhs (rupees two lakhs only) or actuals as expenditure projected (whichever is minimum), discussed and decided upon by IACTA research board during presentation of the project, for a period of two years duration.

All the decisions, as the names of PIs who will be granted funds, will be announced in the GBM by the Chairman IACTA research fund board (Vice-President IACTA).

The research grant sanctioned by IACTA research fund board will be disbursed by the IACTA office in two equal instalments; first instalment after the project is sanctioned and second when the first instalment of the grant is used up by the PI. When the second instalment is requested, the PI should provide all the original bills/invoices to the IACTA research fund board (Treasurer IACTA) and send the progress report of the project (Dean Research).

The money can only be used to buy consumables; drugs; diagnostic kits; pay fees of statistician; and/or pay for tests done for the patient as discussed at the time of presentation of the project by the PI and approved by the IACTA research board.

The grant money cannot be used to pay staff; buy permanent assets; for conveyance and travel; registration fees of any meeting; to attend any conference; membership fees of society; to buy journals or articles; to pay for open access fees to journals; to buy equipment; to buy any computer, accessories or electronic goods. Unused money has to be returned to the IACTA research fund by the PI.

The PI has to give an undertaking that the project is not funded by any other agency, and they will not take any funds or any consideration from any other agency during the course of the project. Such undertaking must be given by PI prior to submission of project.

As the fund is sanctioned by the IACTA research fund, a memorandum of understanding (MOU) will be signed between the IACTA and the PI stating terms and conditions of the grant. A copy of this MOU would be given to the head of institute where the research is performed.

The financial support by the IACTA research fund will be prioritized to projects submitted from the institutions/ hospitals which have no institutional intramural or access to extramural funding or industry funding. Priority will be given to young researchers coming from institutes with established teaching program like DM, DNB, FNB, FIACTA, PDCC/PDF in cardiac anaesthesia. IACTA research fund can be given to any hospital that is preferably doing around 500 cardiothoracic and/or vascular cases per annum. Multicentric studies can be taken up by low volume hospital/ institutes or when a large sample size is required (for e.g., if the primary outcome is mortality).

Project progress and completion:

Mid-term project report must be submitted by the PI at the end of first year (for a two-year project) or at the mid-term of the total sanctioned duration (if less than two years). Completion report must be submitted at the end of the tenure of two years or upon completion of the project, whichever is earlier. Under extraordinary circumstances, if the PI needs more time, then a formal request mentioning genuine reasons should reach the member secretary, IACTA research fund board (Dean Research) at least three months before completion date of the project, and an extension of six months only once will be permitted (without any increase in the approved financial assistance).

At the completion of the project the PI will submit all the invoices/bills pertaining to the expenditure along with the project completion report (duly signed by the PI and all the co-investigators, and forwarded by the head of the Institution), as well as the draft of the paper intended to be published to the Member secretary of the IACTA research fund board (Dean Research).

The PI is supposed to keep all the raw data related to the project for at least for five years with self, so that in case the IACTA research board needs to check the authenticity of the research, this can be verified. Signed patient consent forms is mandatory and will have to be preserved by the PI for a period of five years. A soft copy of the blinded patients' details (name and date of operation/ procedure, lead physician, lead anaesthesiologists, in excel format in chronological order) should be sent along with the final report.

The objective of the money given for the project will be clearly defined. All the bills/receipts of the fund given should be given to IACTA treasurer before the release of next payment. IACTA research board has right to get all the bills at any time during the project. In special circumstances, a request can be made by the PI for release of money from the sanctioned amount if required any time during the project.

In case of morbidity and mortality of any patient recruited in the project, IACTA research fund board, or IACTA, or ICCA will not be responsible in any way. The PI's hospital /Institute will bear the complete responsibility and it has to be included in the signed agreement between the PI and the IACTA research board. The signed agreement will be forwarded to the hospital/institute authorities.

After completion of the project, all the papers resulting from the project will be submitted to the Annals of Cardiac Anaesthesia (ACA) for consideration for publication. In

the event the paper is not accepted by ACA, then the same can be sent for publication to other journals by the PI and co-investigators. Similarly, for presentation, the paper should be presented during the IACTA conference first, and subsequently in other platforms. However, these papers cannot be considered for any award instituted by IACTA due to perceived conflict of interest. The data of the project would be the property of IACTA. Data should not be used for any other publication by simply changing the name of the paper. Members of the research board cannot be PIs during their tenure in the research board, due to conflict of interest.

Soft copy of the project along with other items detailed in checklist is to be sent to: iccadean.research@gmail.com

Check list items:

1. Complete project proposal in word document including sample size calculation and detailed statistical plan. Please divide the sections into Background (What is known and what is the gap; 250-300 words), Hypothesis (Define a hypothesis at the end of introduction section- For e.g., “We hypothesize that pecto-intercostal plane block will provide superior analgesia and result in less release of inflammatory markers compared to standard of care intravenous analgesia regimen in patients undergoing surgery with median sternotomy”), Primary and Secondary objectives (clearly spell the primary and secondary objectives (if any) of the project), and Methods (this section should be detailed within 1000 words). At the end of methods section, please include the plan for statistical analysis.
2. Detailed budget expenditure (please note that the expenditure will only be permitted for the approved items as declared in the original submission proposal).
3. Copy of institute ethics/research committee clearance or at the least, proof of application to IEC/IRB for the same project.
4. Trial registry number, if applicable (mandatory for all randomized controlled trials).