Chronic Pain Centre of Excellence for Canadian Veterans
Centre d'excellence sur la douleur chronique pour les vétérans canadiens

CPCoE Request for Proposals May 2023

"Deepening our understanding of the military to civilian transition for Veterans living with chronic pain"

Background

Military to civilian transition is an important event for Canadian Veterans. Transition is the period of time where military members transition to life after service and reintegrate into the greater community. Every member of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) will go through transition and have different experiences along their journey. Individuals are typically moving from a highly structured to less structured communities. CAF members receive healthcare services through a federally administered military healthcare system – this changes as a member is released from the CAF and transitions to one of the provincial or territorial healthcare systems.

As with other populations, transitioning across healthcare systems can create multiple health and administrative challenges for Veterans, including both those who are medically released from service and those whose transition is unrelated to their medical status. Recent research on the transition experience of Canadian Veterans has highlighted common themes specifically among those preparing to be medically released from military service. These include uncertainty about the prognosis of their injury and what their future may look like, a lack of readiness to move into a civilian career and lifestyle, and a feeling of being overwhelmed by the administrative aspects of the transition process. Once medically released, Canadian Veterans face new transition stressors such as the management of their illness or injury and accessing healthcare, managing or obtaining employment, and obtaining appropriate and expected financial supports. These observations are consistent with research from other countries. Veterans report common difficulties during military to civilian transition such as: a loss of sense of identity, a disconnect with civilian society, difficulty with the transition to post-secondary education, homelessness, and difficulty returning to a normal family role and structure. These experiences may be exacerbated by the widespread challenge of access to family physicians and primary care, which appears to be more acute for military Veterans than for the general population. Notably, little research has so far been conducted on transition-related health issues of the majority of Canadian Veterans who are not medically released.

Despite the universality of the military to civilian transition, and despite the associated challenges, little research has been conducted to understand how transition impacts the lives of Canadian Veterans living with chronic pain, including those who have been medically released with pain-related diagnoses, those who have transitioned for non-medical reasons, and those who develop significant chronic pain during or after the transition to civilian life. The prevalence of Veterans living with chronic pain has been reported to be as high as 50%, more than twice the civilian population. The lack of research focused on Veterans living with chronic pain and their transition experiences represents a significant population gap in the understanding of military to civilian transition in Canada. A greater understanding of the challenges Canadian Veterans living with chronic pain face will allow for policy, supports, and services to better meet their health needs.

Overall Objectives for this funding opportunity

- To better understand the impact of transition from military to civilian life on the identity and mental health of Canadian Veterans, with a focus on Veterans living with chronic pain and their family members.
- To test the applicability of theories, models, or frameworks for analyzing other kinds of health transitions to the Veteran transition experience, or to develop new frameworks for doing so.

- To analyze how transition impacts access to healthcare of Canadian Veterans living with chronic pain, including specific consideration of access to and engagement with family physicians and primary care.
- To identify opportunities to improve the transition experience of Canadian Veterans living with chronic pain.
- To build the capacity and knowledge of Canadian Veterans with chronic pain to maintain a level of activity, work, and/or function post transition, comparable to their experience in the military.

Research Types

All research types are eligible for this request for proposal, including, but not limited to pilot clinical trials, observational studies, evidence syntheses, qualitative studies, policy analyses, etc.

Duration of Studies

We expect the majority of submissions will be for studies of one year duration. However, submissions for multi-year studies will be considered if the longer duration is well justified by the applicant(s).

Funds Available

The total amount available for this funding opportunity is $450 000, enough to fund approximately 3 grants.

Eligibility

Principal Applicants must hold an academic position in an affiliated Canadian institution, or an international academic institution, and be eligible to hold research funds at their institution. Research with direct relevance to Canadian Veterans living with pain will be prioritized. Submissions focusing on Veteran populations from other countries are eligible for this opportunity but should include a clear rationale about the relevance to the Canadian context.

Submission and Decision Deadlines

All application materials must be received by August 28, 2023. Late submissions will not be considered. Please see subsequent pages for application specifications. Projects will be adjudicated in the Fall 2024 and final funding decisions made in the early Winter 2024.

Evaluation Criteria

The CPCoE uses a competitive application process with adjudication completed by members of our Scientific Advisory Board (SAB). For more information on how proposals are rated, click here.

Application Instructions

The following provides instructions for completing your CPCoE Research Proposal Application. Please also familiarize yourself with the CPCoE Funding Guidelines.

If you have any questions, please contact CPCoE: **research@vcp-vdc.ca.**

General Instructions

Please follow these instructions when preparing and submitting your application. Note: applications that do not adhere to these instructions will not be considered.

- CPCoE uses an e-mail application process. Your completed application and required attachments must be sent via e-mail to **research@vcp-vdc.ca.**
- You cannot submit more than one application per competition as a Principal Applicant. **If you do, CPCoE will automatically withdraw the last application submitted according to the most recent submission date.**
- The total number of pages of the application must not exceed 5 pages for applications written in English (6 pages for applications written in French), excluding cover letter, budget, CVs, and references. The application must be prepared using Times New Roman size 12 font with single spacing and margins must not be less than 2 cm (3/4 inch) on all sides.
- Carefully read the specific instructions for each section of the application (see subsequent pages). All sections must be completed.
- Use of bullet points and sub-headers, where appropriate, are acceptable.
- All cited work must be fully referenced and be numbered consecutively in the order they are cited in the text using Arabic numbers in parentheses (Vancouver style) and included in a full bibliography at the end of the proposal.
- It is your responsibility to ensure your application is complete prior to submission.
- Submit your application before the deadline specified in the Funding Opportunity.
- Read and sign the "Consent and Submit" page (see last page).

Required Attachments

At the time of application, you will be required to attach the following to your e-mail submission, in addition to your application:

- Certificate for Sex and Gender-Based Analysis Plus (SGBA+) training
- Certificate for "*Patient Engagement Training Course: A How-to-Guide for Patient Engagement in Research*" Modules 1-4 provided by the Canadian Institute of Health Research (CIHR) Institute of Musculoskeletal Health and Arthritis (IMHA)

Specific Instructions

Please follow these instructions when preparing each section of your application and utilize the template here.

Main Contact Information (Include in Cover Page; Excluded from Application Page Count)

Provide the name, institution name, telephone, and e-mail for the Principal Applicant (PA). Please let CPCoE know if the PA requires any communications accommodations.

Research Project Title (Include in Cover Page; Excluded from Application Page Count)
The project title should be short and reflect the content of the project and objectives.

Note: If awarded, CPCoE will use this title in all official correspondence, and will request a lay title.

Scientific Abstract (Include in Cover Page; Excluded from Application Page Count)
Include a concise summary of the proposed research and how it fulfills the expectations of the respective Funding Opportunity.

Background and Rationale
Provide a brief overview of relevant background information and/or rationale for your proposed research. Indicate what the need is for your project, and how you have identified this need. Include a focused literature review highlighting the gaps in existing knowledge that you will address, including references of cited work using numerical referencing. Ensure that you have clearly identified the research question(s) that you intend to answer.

Where appropriate, include details of how you consulted with Canadian Veterans and their families, healthcare professionals, and/or other relevant stakeholders about the need for doing this research.

Objective(s)
Indicate the broad goal(s) and specific research aims of your proposed research, and a clear explanation of how they fit the objectives of the Funding Opportunity. Your objectives(s), general and/or specific, should sum up the overall purpose of your project

It is important to highlight how your project will contribute to improving the lives of Veterans, and their families, living with chronic pain.

Methods
Describe the design of your project. Describe your methodology and the justification for that choice, including any sample sizes / number of participants and how this was decided; data collection; measurement methods; and analysis. You should also include the demographic details that you plan to collect, the change mechanisms that will be assessed, and the outcome measures that will be collected. Any subsequent calculations, such as power analysis or other relevant tests or proofs of concept, should also be included.

- **Procedure/study design**
  Please indicate the type of study that will be conducted (e.g., descriptive, correlational, causal-comparative, cross sectional, longitudinal, randomized clinical trial, qualitative, etc.). The use of a flowchart is acceptable.

  Note: If awarded, CPCoE will require ethics approval, or proof of exemption from ethics, for your project.

- **Participants**
  Indicate the number of participants, demographic details, sample size calculation (if indicated), inclusion end exclusion criteria, etc.

- **Data collection**
  Indicate the method of data collection that will be used and the specific outcomes/tools (e.g., surveys, questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, observations, records and documents, clinical tests, etc.) including their metrological qualities (if known), and if these tools are publicly available. If your research proposal is a qualitative study, be sure to provide sufficient detail to the reviewers for them to appreciate the rigour of the proposed methods.
  Note: Participants must be given the opportunity to participate in their official language of choice, English or French. This pertains to all aspects of participation, including in-person interviews. Please include any translation costs in your budget. Additional funds will not be provided for translation.

- **Outcomes measures / variables**
  List and briefly describe all outcome measures and/or variables that will be used.

- **Analysis**
  Include type of analysis performed for each objective listed above
  Note: Explain how the research project will address Sex and Gender-Based Analysis Plus (SGBA+) considerations, including, but not limited to: factors of: i) sex, ii) gender, iii) age, iv) disability, v) geography, vi) culture, vii) income, viii) sexual orientation, ix) education, x) race, xi) ethnicity and/or xii) religion.

Expected Outcomes/Impact

Enumerate the expected outcomes of the proposed research, highlighting its significance and how it will advance knowledge and/or its application to healthcare for Veterans, health systems, and/or health outcomes. Describe the reasonably anticipated benefits to Canadian Veterans, and their families, living with chronic pain as a result of your research.

Veteran Engagement

At the core of the CPCoE's research is the principle of Veteran engagement. In addition to including Veterans as participants who voluntarily elect to participate in surveys, interviews, and trials, the CPCoE strongly encourages researchers to include Veteran Partners. While engaging veterans in a CPCoE application is not mandatory at this time, engaging veteran partners is central to increasing the relevance and potential impact of your Research Proposal Application. Veteran Partners are key members of the research team involved in meaningful and active collaboration to shape and execute research from the onset of projects. Please refer to CPCoE's Veteran and Researcher Partnership Guide for further information.

Please describe how Canadian Veterans, and/or their families, living with chronic pain have been (or will be) involved in the development of your project. This includes but is not limited to: providing perspective from lived experience, consultation on research design, engagement strategies with potential participants, and/or helping make knowledge mobilization activities more applicable. Applicants should articulate how they plan to work with Veteran(s) (i.e., communication, hours of work, role within the team, workflow, etc.), specify the skills and knowledge required of those Veteran(s), and indicate their expected level of involvement (patient partner, co-lead. etc.).

Note: When Veterans and their family members Partner in research, the CPCoE requires that they receive honoraria for their time and contribution. If you plan to incorporate Veteran Partners, ensure

you have included honoraria in your budget. See the CPCoE recommended standardized honoraria for Veteran/family Partners involved in research and KM activities in the Budget section below.

Feasibility

Are the timelines and related deliverables of the project realistic?

Where applicable, consider adding potential threats to the success of your research (e.g., number of eligible participants required to recruit, ethics approval deadlines, regulatory approvals, development of tools or questionnaires, etc.), and how you plan to mitigate them.

Indicate and explain any experience that the members of your research team, or their organizations, have with managing similar projects that could enhance the realization and success of the study.

Knowledge Mobilization (KM)

Explain the research project's Knowledge Mobilization (KM) plan, both during the project and at the end of the project, to effectively disseminate research findings. Describe how you will make the information from your research useable and accessible to Veterans, and their families, living with chronic pain, healthcare professionals, health administrators, and/or other Knowledge Users. The KM plan should include details regarding target audiences, goals, strategies to achieve those goals, knowledge products, and evaluation metrics. Depending on the nature of the study, it may be relevant to identify an integrated KM strategy where, besides veteran partners, other key stakeholders such as as clinicians, health administrators or policy makers, may be integrated within the research work.

KM is an important component of CPCoE research funding. CPCoE requires the following KM items at the conclusion of all projects. Ensure you incorporate these items in your budget:

- A 1-2 page plain language (lay) summary; and
- 1-2 knowledge products, in addition to publications and conference presentations/posters, tailored for knowledge users that are co-created with the CPCoE's KM team and relevant knowledge user groups. Examples of knowledge products can include: evidence briefs, infographics, videos, webinars, workshops, etc. More examples can be found here. In addition, the CPCoE will provide further KM information via webinar or video.
- Ensure you plan for how you will involve Veteran/family Partners, or members of other Knowledge User groups, in KM planning and/or products, as identified above.

Note: CPCoE requires open access publishing. Please include any open access fees in your budget. Additional funds will not be provided for open access fees.

Note: KM products must be available in both English and French. Please include any translation costs in your budget. Additional funds will not be provided for translation.

Research Team

It is important that members of the research team cover all the expertise required (disciplines and methodologies) to carry out the project (e.g., clinical expertise relevant to the target clientele, or methodological expertise in methodology relevant to a study to validate measurement tools).

Provide the full name, contact information, and unit of affiliation of all individuals who will be involved in the project, and their specific role (Principal Applicant, Co-Principal Applicant, Co-Applicant, Collaborator, Veteran and/or Family Member Partner, etc.). Further definitions are provided below:

- ***Principal Applicant (PA):*** author of the intellectual content of the application submitted. The PA is responsible for the overall direction of a research project and all proposed activities, including meeting the reporting requirements. Principal Applicants must hold an academic position in an affiliated Canadian institution, or an internationally recognized academic institution.
- ***Co-Principal Applicant*** (Co-PA): co-author of the intellectual content of the application submitted who shares the responsibility for the overall direction of the research project and all proposed activities with the PA. This is an individual who is expected to actively participate in the proposed activities, but not to direct them. This may include individuals with academic positions or individuals outside of academia with relevant expertise.
- ***Collaborator:*** individual whose role is to provide a specific service (e.g., access to equipment, provision of specific reagents, training in a specialized technique, statistical analysis, access to a patient population, etc.).
- A ***Veteran / Family Member Partner*** is an individual with lived experience (i.e., a Canadian Veteran, or their family member or caregiver, living with chronic pain, who is actively contributing to the development of the research).

Budget (1 Page Maximum, Excluded from Application Page Count)

Provide a detailed budget in relation to planned activities and clearly justify all budget items in Canadian dollars. The budget should take into consideration any anticipated changes over the course of the project.

Complete the budget using the below chart, as follows:

- Indicate the amount required in each budget category, as well as a comprehensive description of what the funds will be used for, to justify the amount requested.
- As a Qualifying Not-for-profit Organization and Charity, CPCoE strongly discourages institutional overhead wherever possible. Where institutional overhead is necessary, include it in your budget. Additional funds will not be provided for institutional overhead.
- Include Honoraria for Veteran/family Partners involved in research and KM activities. CPCoE recommends the following standardized Honoraria:
    - • Every hour: $50.00
    - • Half day (3.5 hours): $200.00
    - • Full day (7 hours): $400.00
- All applications resulting from this research must be published open access. Include any open access publishing fees in your budget.
- Include any translation costs related to project participation and resulting KM products.

Budget

Item	Description	Amount
Research staff All research staff required for the research and corresponding technical needs.		

Trainees Costs related to the training and mentoring of trainees, students and knowledge users.		
Participants (Recruitment, Honoraria, etc.)		
Consumables A list of items such as materials and supplies, services, travel necessary for conducting research, etc. and justifiable rationale.		
Non-consumables A list of equipment and related operating/maintenance costs. Equipment is defined as any item (or collection of items) of nonexpendable tangible property, having a useful life of more than 1 year, used wholly or in part for research. Maintenance and operating costs of equipment are also eligible.		
Knowledge Mobilization Costs associated with disseminating your research results, such as: manuscript publication, conference presentations/posters, travel, other knowledge products (e.g., evidence briefs, infographics, videos, etc.).		
Other Costs associated with other expenses for research not covered in the above categories.		
Financial / In-kind Partners List any funding from partners (cash and/or in-kind support) that you have secured or expect to secure. Enter the partner's financial contribution or estimated value in the In-Kind column for each year. You may describe how the contribution from the partner will be used towards the proposed research project.		
TOTAL* ***Including Overhead, but excluding Financial / In-kind Partners**		

CV (Excluded from Application Page Count)

Include an updated abbreviated CV for the Principal Applicant (CIHR Biosketch CV, or equivalent, is acceptable).

References (Excluded from Application Page Count)

All cited work must be fully referenced in numerical style and included in a full bibliography.