CPCoE Request for Proposals May 2023

“Addressing the chronic pain and mental illness comorbidity”

Background.................................................................................................................................................. 2
Overall Objectives ........................................................................................................................................... 2
Research Types .................................................................................................................................................. 3
Duration of Studies ........................................................................................................................................... 3
Funds Available ................................................................................................................................................... 3
Eligibility ............................................................................................................................................................. 3
Submission and Decision Deadlines .............................................................................................................. 3
Evaluation Criteria ............................................................................................................................................. 3
Application Instructions ..................................................................................................................................... 4
General Instructions .......................................................................................................................................... 4
  Required Attachments ................................................................................................................................. 4
Specific Instructions ........................................................................................................................................... 4
Expected Outcomes/Impact ............................................................................................................................... 6
Veteran Engagement ........................................................................................................................................ 6
Feasibility ........................................................................................................................................................... 7
Knowledge Mobilization (KM) ........................................................................................................................ 7
Research Team .................................................................................................................................................. 7
Budget ............................................................................................................................................................... 8
CV .................................................................................................................................................................... 10
References ......................................................................................................................................................... 10
Background
Mental health conditions are a growing concern and target for intervention amongst the general Canadian population. It is estimated that in any given year, 1 out of every 5 Canadians will experience a mental illness. Additionally, by the time Canadians reach the age of 40, it is estimated that 50% will have or have had a mental illness. This is no different in the Canadian Veteran population. In the recent Life After Service Study (LASS) in 2019, 37% of Canadian Veterans surveyed reported a current mental health condition. This is an increase of 6% since the previous survey in 2016. Amongst the reported conditions, 26% of Canadian Veterans self-reported a mood condition, 21% self-reported an anxiety disorder, and 24% self-reported having post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Additionally, 32% of Canadian Veterans reported having both a physical health condition and a comorbid mental health condition. Finally, 10% of Canadian Veterans report having had suicidal ideation in the previous 12 months, and 26% report having had suicidal ideation at some point in their lifetime. All of these statistics represent an increase from those previously reported in the LASS survey in 2016, highlighting the need for better understanding of the mental health conditions of Canadian Veterans.

Chronic pain is an important factor in the mental health of Veterans. Chronic pain has been found to have an association with suicidal ideation or suicide, PTSD, and anxiety or mood disorders. Amongst Canadian Veterans, it has been found that comorbid anxiety and physical conditions or chronic pain can have significant impacts on quality of life and general activity. Amongst Canadian Veterans living with chronic pain, those with higher pain severity were more likely to report severe psychological distress or probable PTSD. Canadian Veterans who had moderate to high pain severity were more likely to report higher support needs for activities of daily living. Additionally, Canadian Veterans who reported severe chronic pain were also more likely to report physical and mental health problems, high levels of stress, and suicidal ideation when compared with those who reported low to moderate pain severity. Similar observations have been noted in the Veteran populations of other nations in the Five Eyes intelligence alliance.

Despite the high prevalence, the chronic pain and mental illness comorbidity is relatively understudied amongst Veterans and civilians alike. This is especially true for evaluations of clinical, systems, and policy interventions for improving pain and/or mental illness. More research, including innovative methods that utilize or develop frameworks accounting for multimorbidity and complexity, is essential in advancing health system improvements for Veterans and civilians living with chronic pain and mental illness comorbidities.

Overall Objectives for this funding opportunity
- Advance the understanding of complex relationship between chronic pain and associated mental health conditions amongst Canadian Veterans, including encouraging innovations in research approaches that adequately capture and account for chronic pain and mental illness comorbidities.
- Explore how the experience and impact of chronic pain and comorbid mental health conditions compares between Canadian Veterans and the civilian population.
• Develop and evaluate clinical, system, and/or policy interventions to improve comorbid chronic pain and mental illness for Canadian Veterans.
• Support Canadian Veterans in alleviating the impact of comorbid chronic pain and post-traumatic stress disorder on their activities of daily living.
• Explore the relationship of chronic pain as a risk factor for suicidal ideation and suicide in Canadian Veterans living with pain.

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 found 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 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research staff</td>
<td>All research staff required for the research and corresponding technical needs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Trainees</strong></td>
<td>Costs related to the training and mentoring of trainees, students and knowledge users.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participants</strong></td>
<td>(Recruitment, Honoraria, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Consumables</strong></td>
<td>A list of items such as materials and supplies, services, travel necessary for conducting research, etc. and justifiable rationale.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-consumables</strong></td>
<td>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.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Knowledge Mobilization</strong></td>
<td>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.).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other</strong></td>
<td>Costs associated with other expenses for research not covered in the above categories.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Financial / In-kind Partners</strong></td>
<td>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.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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.