



AMSSM CRN Request for Proposals

Addressing Health Disparities in Sports Medicine

Background and Purpose: The mission of the American Medical Society for Sports Medicine (AMSSM) is to be the pre-eminent organization for primary care sports medicine in the United States. In the past five years, the AMSSM Collaborative Research Network (CRN) has developed and hosted three research summits in order to highlight research needs, best practices and resources on pertinent topics in sports medicine to the membership. These summits have been central to creating and fostering collaborative research within AMSSM, educating AMSSM members on important topics that have research gaps in sports medicine and highlighting opportunities for members to engage in meaningful research. Tangible outcomes from these summits include peer-reviewed manuscripts, national and international presentations on summit conclusions, and creation of collaborative research groups. In April 2023, the AMSSM CRN hosted a research summit focused on justice, equity and diversity in sports medicine. Health disparities have been identified across geographic areas, socioeconomic groups and among many other groups in the United States. They are observed in all areas of health care and include gaps in access to health care, health care utilization, health outcomes and rates of morbidity and mortality. These disparities reduce life expectancy and quality of life for members of underserved and underrepresented groups in the United States. Efforts to understand and address these health disparities have not been prioritized, particularly in the field of sports and exercise medicine (SEM), and there is little published literature focusing on this area. Recent efforts within SEM have been made to identify and better understand the impact of health disparities in this space. However, elimination of health disparities in SEM will require improved understanding about the causes of health disparities in addition to multifaceted and sustained approaches for health promotion, disease prevention and delivery of appropriate care for a diverse population. In an effort to address these issues, the AMSSM CRN is publishing this request for proposals that seek to address topics related to health disparities in sports medicine and contribute to the growing evidence base.

General summary:

Published Date: June 2023

Summary: Following the 2023 Sports Medicine For All AMSSM CRN Research Summit, the CRN now seeks impactful research proposals from AMSSM members that aim to address topics related to health disparities in sports medicine. Specifically, proposals addressing key research topics that were identified during the summit in the areas of racial inequity, ableism, sexism, heterosexism/transphobia, interpersonal violence, social-economic status, geographic location, education, ageism, religion, mental health or preferred language that is not English, are strongly encouraged

Eligibility: All Principal Investigators (PIs) must be active members of AMSSM, in good standing. PIs from both community practice and academic institutions are encouraged to apply

Key dates: All deadlines are 5pm ET unless otherwise specified

- Application Deadline: September 15, 2023
- Award Announcement: November 15, 2023

Maximum Project Budget: \$15,000 for up to 2 years (we anticipate awarding 2 grants)

Maximum Project Timeline: 2 years

APPLICATION PROCESS

Overview: This RFP will involve a single-stage submission process. Applicants will be required to submit a full study proposal that is responsive to the requirements of this RFP. Proposals will be reviewed by a CRN convened scientific review panel based on the criteria outlined below. This panel will include experts in the field, established researchers, community advisors, members of AMSSM leadership, and/or members of the Research Committee. Finalists will be presented to the AMSSM Board of Directors for approval before awards are announced.

Eligibility: In addition to meeting all specified requirements of a complete application, proposals and investigators must adhere to the following criteria to be eligible for this RFP:

- All PIs must be active members of AMSSM in-good-standing (a PI who is not an AMSSM member is acceptable if a co-PI is an AMSSM member)
- PIs and Co-Investigators may be from academic institutions and/or private practice
- Proposals should be relevant addressing health disparities related to the clinical practice of sports medicine

Collaboration with the CRN: In conjunction with its mission to foster research that ultimately advances the practice of sports medicine, the AMSSM CRN actively promotes collaboration and engagement with the research network. Although collaboration with the CRN is not required for this initiative, investigators may find CRN support helpful for the success of their proposed research study. The following are examples of CRN resources available to investigators:

- Research coordination and project management across multiple sites (including regulatory support)*
- Comprehensive biostatistical support*
- Assistance with final study design, methodology, and content validity of study outcome measures
- Assistance with central data storage, management and coordination*
- Help with data safety monitoring needs

**Monetary support should be written into your budget. Please talk with AMSSM Research Program Manager, Sarah Sund, if you are interested in these services for your proposal and need help with these line items for budget development.*

Questions regarding opportunities for CRN collaboration and/or support not listed above can be directed to the AMSSM Research Program Manager at any stage of the application process.

Community Involvement: An important discussion point at the Summit, and in a growing number of research circles nationwide, involves the intentional inclusion of community members, organizations and/or patients when conducting research. The involvement of community partners in the design, conduct and dissemination phases can greatly enhance the efficiency and significance of a research project. **This RFP requires investigator teams to include a community member(s) or organization(s) as part of the research proposal.** Investigators should describe the involvement of this partner(s) in their proposal as part of the research strategy. Investigators should also consider how they would appropriately support or acknowledge the time and efforts provided by their community partner(s). Those wishing to learn more about strategies and best practices for community engagement, are

encouraged to view [resources on community engagement](#) put out by the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI).

Review Criteria: To encourage consistent, fair and reliable review of proposals, this RFP will follow adapted NIH guidelines for critique and scoring based on the scientific merit of proposals, as shown below. Proposals will also be assessed for alignment with the priority research topic areas AMSSM members identified during the Summit working groups as high importance. Full applications will be scored according to the four criteria identified below. Each criterion will receive an independent score, which contributes to an overall application score.

Significance & Relevance: The significance and relevance of proposals will be assessed based on the research questions identified in this RFP and their applicability to the practice of sports medicine in the clinical setting. Additionally, the application will be reviewed on its potential to answer or provide critical information towards knowledge gaps in the field. Purposeful inclusion of the impact of social determinants of health on study outcomes should be addressed in this section.

Innovation: Innovation of projects will be judged based upon the concepts, methodological approaches, and interventions that are novel in the area of sports medicine or seek to challenge current clinical and scientific thinking/practices.

Approach: The approach will be judged through feasibility, qualifications of the research team, appropriateness of study design and methodology, justification of approach, and the clarity of responses. A clear understanding of potential limitations and possible alternative strategies should be described.

Investigators & Environment: This category will be based on the team of investigators with necessary qualifications to successfully carry-out the project and with the appropriate resources, facilities and equipment to complete the proposed research study.

Note to applicants: An important outcome of the 2023 AMSSM Research Summit will be the publication of a manuscript identifying methodological considerations for investigators interested in conducting sports and exercise medicine research through an equity lens. Unfortunately, this manuscript will not be available by the submission deadline, but applicants are encouraged to view and consider important [DEI principles](#) outlined by the British Journal of Sports Medicine as they put together their proposals. Additionally, consideration of theoretical frameworks that underpin the proposed research study are encouraged, though not required. One example of such a framework is the NIMHD Research Framework that can be found [here](#).

Additional Review Criteria: Other review criteria will not be scored individually, but will be considered as part of the overall impact score. These criteria include development of an appropriate study timeline, adequate protection of human subjects (including risk and protection against risk, potential benefits, and importance of knowledge gained), responsiveness to the topic areas identified in this RFP, and an appropriate budget justification.

Adherence to all requirements full application is essential; failure to comply will result in proposals not being scored.

Number of submissions: There is no limit to the number of proposals any one investigator, practice or institution may submit or co-investigate in response to this RFP; however, all requirements must be upheld for each submission.

Human Subjects Approval: Prior Institutional Review Board approval is not required at the time of submission; however, no funds will be dispersed for research purposes until IRB approval is received by AMSSM. **Proof of IRB approval will be required within six months of acknowledgement of approval of the award.** If you do not have an Institutional Review Board, review of your project by your hospital Human Subjects Committee or equivalent is required for funding. If your hospital or private practice does not have a Human Subjects committee or equivalent, please contact the AMSSM Research Program Manager prior to submission (ssund@amssm.org) to determine alternative options. It is the sole responsibility of the principal investigator(s) and their institution(s) to ensure the work is carried out within the required guidelines.

Timeline and Award Notification: All proposals submitted in response to this RFP will be due no later than **5p.m ET on September 15, 2023**. Applications must be submitted through the AMSSM Grant Portal. Full applications will be scored by a panel of reviewers, and award recipients, upon approval of the AMSSM Board of Directors, will be announced on or around November 15, 2023. *AMSSM reserves the right to not award any or all proposals in any grant cycle.*

Dissemination Strategy: Award winners will be required to meet with CRN leadership and leaders of the AMSSM Practice & Policy Committee to develop a dissemination plan for study results before funds are dispersed. The groups will work collaboratively to identify the most appropriate means for dissemination and ways in which the CRN and/or the Practice & Policy committee can assist in these efforts.

Progress Reports: Progress reports, including annual expenditures, must be submitted to the AMSSM CRN at the conclusion of each year. Any balance of more than \$200 must be refunded to AMSSM within 60 days of project completion. No cost extension of unused funds will be considered with appropriate justification and rationale provided by the PI. A final progress report, including all expenditures, should be submitted to the AMSSM CRN within 90 days of study completion and should include a brief description of study results and significance of findings. Any major changes to study protocol should be discussed with the CRN and must be submitted in writing to the CRN within 30 days of the changes taking place. Communications and progress reports should be sent to the CRN Research Program Manager: ssund@amssm.org.

Presentations and Publications: Award recipients are expected to submit their research for presentation at scientific meetings, including the AMSSM Annual Meeting. The AMSSM CRN expects timely publication of research results in appropriate peer-reviewed, scientific journals. All publications resulting in whole or in part from the grant must include a statement similar to: **“Funded in part by a grant from the American Medical Society for Sports Medicine (AMSSM) Foundation and Collaborative Research Network (CRN). The opinions expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the AMSSM.”** All presentations and posters should include a similar acknowledgement.

Instructions for Submitting Materials: All full proposals must be submitted through the appropriate channel on the AMSSM Grant Portal prior to the stated deadline(s). To begin an application, applicants can enter the grant portal via the 2023 Health Disparity grant mechanism on the AMSSM [research grants page](#).

RESEARCH INTEREST AREAS

During the Research Summit, attendees split into breakout groups to discuss research gaps and priority areas in specific areas related to the causes or consequences of health disparities in sports medicine. Proposals are strongly encouraged to address one or more of the following research areas and topics identified as priority areas by AMSSM members participating in the Summit. Topic areas are intended to be broad to allow for flexibility in research questions within each topic area. Research questions that fall within one of the following research areas but do not directly address the specified topics will also be considered.

Ableism:

- Access to resources and opportunities for patients/athletes who are deaf, blind or have physical or mental disabilities
- Education for providers caring for athletes who are deaf blind, or have physical or mental impairments

Ageism:

- Impact of ageism in the workplace (i.e. sports medicine physicians)
- Impact of ageism on the athlete

Education:

- Curriculum on how to conduct DEI education/training

Foreign Language:

- Barriers to care for English as a second language patients/athletes

Geographic Location:

- Access to health care services and resources (e.g., geographical distance, including but not limited to, rural areas, urban areas, or international groups, as a barrier to care)

Heterosexism/Transphobia:

- Transgender athlete sports participation
- Use of hormonal therapy in gender affirming care
- Homophobia in sports

Interpersonal Violence:

- Prevalence and impact of interpersonal violence in all levels of sport
- Assess the effectiveness of interventions

Mental Health:

- Access to mental health resources
- Barriers in obtaining information about mental health

Racial Inequity:

- Barriers for patients in obtaining sports medicine care
- Assessing the Patient-Provider relationship
- Diversity in the sports medicine community

Religion:

- Accommodation of religious clothing or clothing standards in individual and team sport
- Accommodation of religious holy days or a variety of religious holy days in sport participation
- Impact of religious beliefs on the doctor – athlete relationship

Sexism:

- Role of female hormones on performance, mental health, and concussion recovery
- The impact of Social Determinants of Health on prior research that has found a difference in sports injuries between boys/girls and men/women, and determined that these were sex-based

Socioeconomic Status:

- Access to quality care
- Affordable care

AWARD MECHANISMS AND AMOUNTS

Overview: This RFP will award up to 2 research studies for a maximum of \$15,000 each (including direct and indirect costs) over a study period up to 2 years. Smaller projects in cost and duration are also encouraged. Although Institutional Review Board approval is not needed at time of submission, no awarded research funds will be dispersed for human subjects research until IRB approval has been received by AMSSM.

Duration of Funded Research Programs: Proposed research projects should be complete within a maximum of 2 years. No cost extensions beyond the 2-year time frame will be considered with appropriate justification and rationale provided by the PI.

Overhead and Indirect Cost Limits: Per policy of the AMSSM CRN, indirect costs will be capped at 15%. Total requested funds, including direct and indirect costs, may not exceed \$15,000. The AMSSM CRN welcomes the use of matching institutional or other research funds subject to prior approval of the AMSSM CRN leadership committee. Salaries will not be capped.

Acceptable Use of Research Funds: Research funds may be used to support investigator and research personnel salaries (including fringe benefits), costs of medical procedures required for study endpoints but not considered standard of care, expenses required for travel and communication between collaborating sites, and other necessary costs for clinical supplies. Funds may not be used for equipment purchases necessary for implementation of study aims that cost over \$1000, unless prior approval from the CRN has been obtained. Please reach out to AMSSM Research Program Manager, Sarah Sund, if your proposal will require equipment costs over \$1000. Up to \$1500 may be budgeted for travel to non-AMSSM conferences and other educational meetings for dissemination of research (this budget restriction on travel does not apply to necessary travel between study sites for study related purposes). Comprehensive budgets for each year of the research proposal must be provided with all full applications.

FULL APPLICATION:

General guidelines

- The application should be in PDF format, 11-point font or larger with a minimum of ½ inch margins
- Full applications should not exceed 12 pages in length (not including biosketches, references, and other relevant support) Specifically:
 - Cover Page: 1 page
 - Project Abstract: 1 page
 - Research Strategy: 6 pages
 - Timeline: 2 pages
 - Budget & Budget Justification: 2 pages
- Please number all pages

Components of Full Application:

- **Cover Page** – The cover page should follow the template provided in this RFP and be completed in its entirety.
- **Project Abstract:** The abstract should describe the background and key objectives of the proposed research project. In addition, the research design and methods should be clearly identified with a statement of relevance to the practice of sports medicine within the chosen research topic priority area.
- **Research Strategy:** The research plan should not exceed 6 pages in length and include the following key areas: Introduction, Significance, Innovation and Approach. The introduction should clearly identify all primary and secondary aims as well as relevant hypotheses. Relevance to sports medicine clinical care and specific active populations should be included in the significance section. Innovative aspects of the project including novel methods, analytic techniques, or interventions should be identified. The approach should clearly outline the overall plan, methodology and analysis proposed to achieve the specific aims. This section should include a description of the proposed collaboration plan, the targeted patient population and sampling/recruitment strategy, statistical considerations including analytical approach and power/sample size justification, and finally limitations and potential alternative strategies to the approach. Preliminary data are encouraged, if available, but not necessary for a competitive application.
- **Timeline:** Include a proposed timeline of key research milestones throughout the duration of the proposed project
- **Project Budget with Justification:** A detailed budget, itemized by expense categories should be supplied for each year of the proposed project. The budget should list the names and roles of all funded personnel to be involved in the project. In situations where an individual cannot be identified at the time of submission, providing the proposed position title and role are sufficient. Fringe benefit costs for the personnel may be included. Additionally, existing grants or other funding sources being utilized for the same project should be listed separately by briefly stating the funding agency,



amount, and general description of how the funds will be utilized (including direct and indirect costs)

- **References**
- **Biographical Sketches:** Bio-sketches for all key study investigators should adhere to the current [NIH template](#) and should include all pertinent appointments and qualifications. A statement of purpose should be included identifying the investigator's strengths in answering this RFP as it relates to the chosen research topic. Only publications most relevant to the proposed research project are necessary.
- **Documentation of institutional and other relevant support:** This section should contain other documents pertinent to the proposed research project including letters of support (e.g. from collaborators, institutions, clinics, etc.), proposed questionnaires/surveys, statements identifying conflicts of interest, etc.

QUESTIONS

All questions and clarifications related to this RFP or the CRN can be directed to the AMSSM Research Program Manager, Sarah Sund: ssund@amssm.org, phone: 608-265-0027, AMSSM Research Director, Stephanie Kliethermes, PhD: skliethermes@amssm.org, or Chair of the AMSSM CRN, Irfan Asif, MD: iasif@uab.edu, phone: 301-295-3632.



AMSSM CRN Request for Proposals COVER PAGE

Title of Research Project:

Primary Institution:

Principal Investigator(s):

Include name, title, institution, address, phone and e-mail

Anticipated Start Date:

Budget Information:

Total Amount Requested (not more than 2 years): Total \$ _____ for ____ Years

Year 1: \$ _____

Year 2: \$ _____ (if applicable)