**Community Representative: Tips for Writing a Review Assessment**

**Purpose:** As a Community Representative, your written assessment is an opportunity to provide researchers with important feedback that will help them better communicate their research in an understandable and relevant way to the public. Your role is to evaluate the comprehensibility of non-scientific documents and discuss the relevance of the research to the MS community, and potential of the research to translate into meaningful impacts that will ultimately improve the lives of people affected by MS.

**How do I write a strong review assessment?**

* **Comment on the relevance and potential impact of the research study to people affected by MS.** Indicate if these components are clearly described in the application and provide feedback on how it can be improved.
* **Draw from personal experiences.** Based on your lived experience with MS or interactions with the MS community, describe why the research study is important and whether it has potential to make a lasting influence on the health, quality of life, and clinical care among people with MS.
* **Provide specific feedback on the application’s language and accessibility.** Indicate if the applicant used appropriate language to clearly explain background information and key concepts, the goals of the research, and how the research findings will benefit people affected by MS. Please describe what is missing or what can be improved. Indicate whether complex terms need to be defined (e.g., EAE mouse model) or abbreviations need to be spelled out (e.g., PwMS).
* **Don’t be afraid to share your perspective and opinions.**

See sample assessments [here](https://mscanada.ca/media/1817).

**FAQ:**

1. **What makes a research study *relevant* and *impactful* to the MS Community?**

The proposed research should: 1) address the critical needs and challenges faced by people living with MS and/or their care partners, and 2) have the potential to generate meaningful outcomes that will impact the health and quality of life of people affected by MS.

1. **Do I focus on my experience with MS or focus on the experience of the MS community?**

Both. If you have personal experience with the topic at hand, please note how the proposed research would be impactful based on your lived experiences. Additionally, you can draw on the experience of others if the topic could potentially impact the broader MS community.

1. **Do applicants receive my feedback?**

Yes, all feedback is provided to applicants after the review meetings. Your written feedback will be shared with applicants to help them better communicate their research in an understandable and relevant way to the public.

1. **How does my review assessment contribute to the overall research funding process?**

Your review assessment will be considered in making funding recommendations. At the review meeting, you are encouraged to share your overall enthusiasm for the proposed research and highlight any strengths or weaknesses of the non-scientific components of the application. Your written feedback will also be shared with applicants to help them better communicate their research in an understandable and relevant way to the public.

If the non-technical sections of an approved grant are deemed to be unsatisfactory by a community representative, the applicant will be notified of conditional approval of their grant, and **funding of the grant is subject to the receipt and approval of the non-scientific documents**.

1. **How long should my written assessment be?**

Community Representatives will be asked to comment on: 1) the comprehensibility and accessibility of non-scientific documents and 2) relevance and potential impact of the research to the MS community. Each section will have a limit of 500 words, but we recommend including 3-5 sentences per response. See sample assessments [here](https://mscanada.ca/media/1817).

If you have any questions, please contact msgrants@mscanada.ca