Maximising the value of research outputs: Wellcome’s perspective

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Wellcome’s commitment to Open Research

• committed to ensuring research outputs (papers, data, code & materials) can be accessed and used in ways that maximise health & societal benefit
• making these outputs more widely available holds the potential to:
  – accelerate discovery and its application
  – help ensure findings can be validated and reproduced
  – increase efficiency – reduce duplication and waste
• passionate long-term champion of open access & research data sharing
Wellcome’s success framework

Knowledge and discoveries are shared, accessed and used in a manner that maximises health benefit

- Researchers are equipped, empowered and motivated to make research outputs open.
- Research outputs are findable, accessible, interoperable and re-usable (FAIR)
Managing and sharing research outputs – Wellcome policy

- launched a new policy on managing and sharing data, software and materials in July 2017
- extended our previous policy on data management and sharing to other research outputs
- key elements of the policy are:
  - we expect all researchers we fund to maximise access to research data, software and materials with as few restrictions as possible
  - we require an outputs management plan - where the research is likely to generate significant outputs of clear value as a resource
  - we commit to review and support costs of output management plans as integral part of grant

https://wellcome.ac.uk/funding/managing-grant/policy-data-software-materials-management-and-sharing
Strengthening our requirements

• in revising our policy, we made clear that:
  – data and original software underlying publications must be made available at the time of publication
  – data relevant to a public health emergency should be shared as widely and rapidly as possible, irrespective of timing of publication
  – outputs should be discoverable, have persistent identifiers and be placed in recognised community repositories wherever possible

• we also committed to introduce a check at final report stage to examine the extent to which outputs have been shared in line with the policy
Implementing our policy – our experience

• quality of outputs management plans has increased but remains variable
  – format and level of detail varies significantly
  – not clear applicants, reviewers or staff always know what good practice looks like
  – continuing uncertainty over whether costs are being anticipated and requested

• ongoing discussions over how plans are reviewed and where responsibility should lie

• follow-up has been patchy to date and questions around encouragement vs enforcement
Addressing wider barriers to outputs sharing

- there are significant hurdles to outputs sharing
  - reward and assessment structures
  - developing & sustaining infrastructures required
  - shortage of skills and lack of career paths for data specialists
  - addressing ethical concerns
- different disciplines in very different places in terms of availability of resources and enabling cultures
- evidence base for value of openness is still lacking
- committed to working with other funders, journals researchers and institutions to address these challenges.
Developing Open Research

- Dedicated **Open Research team** established at Wellcome in 2017 to lead and coordinate work:
  - **Funder-led activities** – developing major initiatives in areas where funders can take a lead in supporting the community and driving change.
  - **Community-led activities** – supporting researchers and innovators to develop and test cutting-edge approaches to openness; piloting discipline-specific initiatives.
  - **Policy leadership** – taking a lead in developing our policies and practices as a funder to support, incentivise and sustain open research.
- Partnership, engagement and evidence-building at heart of our approach
New funding opportunities

• **Research Enrichment – Open Research** ([link](#))
  – open to Wellcome grantholders and applicants
  – awards of up to £50k for open research approaches that increase the impact of their grant

• **Open Research Fund** ([link](#))
  – annual funding competition launched May 2018, open to researchers and teams from around the world
  – awards of up to £50k to develop, pilot and evaluate cutting-edge approaches to openness
  – deadline for applications: 7 August 2018

• **Data Re-use Prize** (coming soon!)
Working in partnership

• committed to working in partnership with other funders to share experience and realise the benefits of open research

• would welcome the opportunity to work with Belmont Forum partners on key issues, including:
  – implementing open data policies
  – enhancing incentives for outputs sharing
  – maximising the value of outputs management plans
  – developing success factors and indicators for open science

https://wellcomecollection.org/works/tddbyrau
Any Questions?