



Appendix K: Member Recruitment & Selection Strategy

Patient & Public Involvement and Engagement (PPIE) Group at Ziauddin University

This document outlines the recruitment strategy for the Patient & Public Involvement and Engagement (PPIE) group at the Critical Care Research Group (CCRG) of Ziauddin University in Karachi, Pakistan. The strategy focuses on the process of identifying, engaging and selecting individuals for the PPIE group, with the current priority being on recruiting those with lived experience of infectious diseases or participation in critical care and infectious disease research.

Background & Current Members

Established in 2023, the PPIE group was formed to integrate patient and public perspectives into the design and conduct of clinical trials, especially in critical care. However, since August 2024, we have broadened our scope to include all types of infectious disease and critical care research. Current members include caregivers and community advocates, including:

- Male, caregiver to a chronically ill patient.
- Female, school physician.
- Female, working on social impact & bioethics.
- Female, social scientist & midwife.
- Female, community health worker.
- Male, caregiver to a critically ill patient.
- Female, engagement specialist working persons with disabilities.

Recruitment Objective (as of June 2025)

To engage individuals with lived experience of infectious diseases (e.g., dengue, acute encephalitis), past or current research participants, caregivers of critically ill patients and community members with experience in public health.

Recruitment Methods

1. Collaboration with Study Coordinators
 - Aim: Identify potential PPIE members with the help of coordinators of ongoing studies (i.e. dengue and acute respiratory infection surveillance studies, the GenOMICC study, the Mega-ROX & REMAP-CAP trial).
 - Process:
 - A training session will be conducted with study coordinators about the PPIE group and the types of individuals suitable for PPIE involvement (i.e. interested in research, critical, inquisitive).

- If the study coordinators identify an individual that is potentially suitable for PPIE, they are asked to: i) introduce PPIE and give a recruitment flyer to them; or ii) notify the PPIE team about a potential recruit.
- The PPIE coordinators responsible for recruitment will check in daily with site study coordinators.

2. Direct Engagement with Trial Participants & Their Caregivers

- Aim: Identify potential members by advertising in the Clinical Trials Unit (CTU) and directly approaching trial participants and their caregivers during their visits to the CTU.
- Process:
 - Informational flyers and a standee have been placed in the CTU waiting area.
 - The PPIE coordinators responsible for recruitment will visit the CTU at least three times per week for 20–30 minutes to speak with trial participants and caregivers. Permission for this has been given by CTU leaders.
 - If an individual expresses interest, a follow-up will be conducted within 48 hours. Contact details (phone number and email) will be collected for continued engagement and newsletter updates.

3. Collaboration with Clinicians

- Aim: Identify potential members with the help of clinicians.
- Process:
 - Departmental educational events and regular faculty meetings will be attended by the PPIE team twice a year to discuss PPIE, share examples of its impact and encourage referrals of eligible patients or caregivers.
 - All clinicians are invited to the annual PPIE summit where referrals of potential members are encouraged.
 - Individual clinicians and department heads will be periodically approached to ask for help with recruitment.
 - PPIE standees are displayed in the outpatient waiting area to ensure visibility for clinicians and patients.

Recruitment Materials

- Flyers outlining the PPIE group's role and how to get involved have been distributed to outpatient clinics and CTU.
- Two advertising standees have been created and placed in the outpatient department and main hospital lobby.
- All PPIE coordinators have personalised business cards to hand out to potential members.

Assessment & Selection Process

Selection Criteria

No strict eligibility criteria exist for the PPIE group. Instead, coordinators assess potential members subjectively based on their experience, discuss the matter with other coordinators and existing PPIE members, and ultimately make a decision with the potential member about inclusion. In our collective experience, the following attributes indicate that a person has the ability to effectively participate in the PPIE group:

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| 1. Interest in community health or research | 4. Collaborative mindset |
| 2. Commitment and availability | 5. Desire to work towards betterment of the community |
| 3. Confidence to express opinions | 6. Prior engagement experience (Desirable) |

The following attributes indicate an individual that is likely not a good fit for our PPIE group:

1. Inability to commit time
2. Reluctance to engage
3. Conflict of interest
4. Health or personal constraints

Selection Process

Once an individual has been identified as a potential new member for PPIE and initial contact has been made with an explanation of the PPIE initiative, role of members and broad expectations, contact details (phone, email) will be solicited and the process below is followed until the individuals disengages or a final decision is made about inclusion or exclusion:

- **Follow-Up:** Individuals who provide their contact details for recruitment or are referred by study coordinators, clinicians or other partners will be sent a WhatsApp link to the “What is PPIE?” video. A follow-up message will be sent after 48 hours and 1 week to gauge interest and answer any questions, and set up a phone call, if appropriate.
- **Vetting:** An informal phone discussion with one of the coordinators is used to understand motivations for joining the PPIE group, confirm that the individual can commit the time required for the initiative and establish whether they are a good fit for the initiative. If the potential member and coordinator jointly feel that inclusion is appropriate, a time is arranged to meet in-person.
- **Confirmation:** An hour-long in-person meeting is used to complete the *‘My Involvement Profile’* on a laptop together with two coordinators in order to facilitate a two-way exchange about expectations and needs.
- **Onboarding:** Prior to attending the first meeting, the new member will be asked to review and sign the Terms of Reference for the group to ensure transparency and alignment.

Monitoring of Recruitment

- A recruitment log will be maintained on the Master Log to track outreach efforts, responses, and outcomes.
- Progress will be assessed as part of the regular Quarterly Meetings of PPIE leads and coordinators. Challenges will be addressed, and recruitment strategies refined as needed.
- Feedback from new PPIE members will be sought as part of our annual evaluation to improve the recruitment and onboarding process.

Inclusivity & Diversity

The strategy aims to recruit members from diverse backgrounds, including a range of age groups, genders, socioeconomic statuses, and linguistic communities. Measures will also be taken to accommodate individuals with disabilities or other specific needs, ensuring inclusive and equitable participation.

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