

Impact report shows healthy return on public medical research spending

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Today the MRC has published its 2015/16 Economic Impact Report, detailing the positive impact on health, the wider society and the economy of investing in medical research.

MRC investment is part of a collective investment of £3.4bn by the Research Councils UK opens in new window (RCUK) in 2015/16. This investment drives economic growth by helping to deliver the UK's Industrial Strategy of increasing productivity, creating high-value industry, jobs and a skilled workforce.

The report showcases specific examples where MRC-funded research is generating substantial health gains, producing new understanding in areas of significant public health concern, delivering economic returns and realising societal benefits such as improved security against emerging diseases.

It is estimated that for every £1 we invest in [medical research](#), we see a 17 per cent annual return to the UK economy, indefinitely. That is before taking into account the monetised benefits of a healthier population. Include that figure and the rate of return rises to somewhere between 24 and 28 per cent¹.

Key examples of MRC-funded success from 2015/16 include:

- The Francis Crick Institute: a new UK biomedical discovery institute dedicated to understanding the fundamental biology

underlying health and disease. The Crick represents a unique partnership between the MRC, Cancer Research UK, the Wellcome Trust, University College London, Imperial College London and King's College London, with the partners collectively raising £650m to build and run the largest biomedical research institute under one roof in Europe.

- MRC-funded scientists identifying a new form of an antibiotic resistance gene in China, in 2015, a discovery that resulted in the Chinese Government rapidly moving to ban colistin supplements for animal feed from 1 November 2016.
- The MRC signing an agreement, along with more than 30 other organisations, to commit to sharing data and results relevant to the Zika crisis – and future public [health](#) emergencies – as rapidly and openly as possible. This leads on from work begun following the global Ebola outbreak in 2014. MRC-funded research to help contain the outbreak is underway in South America using technology from Oxford Nanopore Technologies, which began as a spinout from MRC research 10 years previously.

More information: Jon Sussex et al. Quantifying the economic impact of government and charity funding of medical research on private research and development funding in the United Kingdom, *BMC Medicine* (2016). [DOI: 10.1186/s12916-016-0564-z](https://doi.org/10.1186/s12916-016-0564-z)

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