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<b>Pitcher's Name</b>	Robert Faff	<b>Purpose</b>	Reverse Engineering Exercise (Barnett et al (2015, BMC Health Services Review))
<b>(A) Working Title</b>	"Streamlined Research Funding using Short Proposals and Accelerated Peer Review"		
<b>(B) Basic Research Question</b>	How well does a novel grants protocol work, that is aimed at reducing the time: (a) for creating health services applications, (b) reviewing these applications and (c) for decisions?		
<b>(C) Key paper(s)</b>	<p>1. Herbert DL, Barnett AG, Clarke P, Graves N. On the time spent preparing grant proposals: an observational study of Australian researchers. <i>BMJ Open</i>. 2013;3(5):e002800.</p> <p>2. Australian Government. Strategic review of health and medical research in Australia - better health through research. 2013 [<a href="http://www.mckeonreview.org.au">http://www.mckeonreview.org.au</a>]</p> <p>3. Canadian Institutes of Health Research. Evaluation of the open operating grant program: final report. 2012 [<a href="http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/documents/oogp_evaluation_report_2012_e.pdf">http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/documents/oogp_evaluation_report_2012_e.pdf</a>]</p>		
<b>(D) Motivation / Puzzle</b>	Despite the widely recognised importance of sustainable health care systems, health services research remains generally underfunded in Australia. NHMRC researchers spend on average 34 days preparing their applications, and this time is rarely rewarded with success, and is a huge burden on reviewers and administrators. In other words there is a HUGE administrative cost attaching to such "information heavy" grant processes. There must be a better way? Does a streamlined process offer hope?		
<b>THREE</b>	<b>Three</b> core aspects of any empirical research project i.e. the "IDioTs" guide		
<b>(E) Idea</b>	The Australian Centre for Health Services Innovation (AusHSI) is funding health services research in the state of Queensland. AusHSI has recently developed a streamlined protocol for applying and awarding funding using a short proposal and accelerated peer review. While still in its infancy, why not explore the effect of this approach on key stakeholders?		
<b>(F) Data</b>	Data coming from 4 separate grant rounds in 2012-2013. Application flow and survey data from applicants in terms of key items like: time spent on proposal; as well as administration data on time from submission to decision notification. Also, data on budget requests, total budget pool each round.		
<b>(G) Tools</b>	Interrogation techniques of web-based portal. Simple descriptive statistics. Observational study, in which data are collected as part of a quality improvement evaluation - thus, not needing ethics approval or consent from applicants: non-identifiable data.		
<b>TWO</b>	<b>Two</b> key questions		
<b>(H) What's New?</b>	While a short form protocol has been activated in Canada in 2013 by the Canadian Institute of Health Research, in Australia NHMRC has thus far only recommended streamlining. So, looking at the short history available for AusHSI streamlined grants as the "experimental setting" is the core novelty.		
<b>(I) So What?</b>	The AusHSI experiment is a convenient test case that can help inform the bigger agenda of bodies like NHMRC, which could lead to a substantial "cost" saving across the system in terms of time used by applicants, reviewers and administrators. Such savings could be substantial, even if only a partial streamlined approach is adopted by other granting bodies. In any case, lessons learned in the smaller setting, given local conditions and "culture" are invaluable.		
<b>ONE</b>	<b>One</b> bottom line		
<b>(J)</b>	Creating a grants protocol that is not only streamlined but which adopts the view that mostly it's about the project merits and NOT the track record of researchers is controversial. Knowledge about the workings of an actual case like AusHSI, though small will help inform policy decision making - that will have potential implications for the big programs in Australia - NHMRC and the ARC. Moreover, this might turn out to constitute a critical stepping		

<b>Contribution?</b>	stone toward creating a health services research institute, which "... could play an influential role in the allocation of future centralised funding for innovative proposals in Australia, including an efficient, transparent and responsive system for grant review and funding allocations."
<b>(K) Other Considerations</b>	<p>As this current pitch is a reverse engineered case taking the ex post perspective, this pitch example adopts advice from Faff (2016) and veiwrs item (K) as a (maximum of) 3 key findings drawn from the artcile by Barnett et al (2015). Accordingly:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. grant success rates increased from 6% (2012) to 16% (2013) - but, given the narrow timeframe, this needs to be interpreted with care</li> <li>2. applicants had a decision in 8 weeks (compared to the 6 or more months typical in the bigger schemes) &amp; appreciated the feedback received</li> <li>3. applicants spent 7 days on average preparing their proposals (contrasting the 34 days for NHMRC)</li> </ol>

This pitch has been created at <http://PitchMyResearch.com> using a template modified from Faff, Robert W., Pitching Research (11 Jan 2015). Available at SSRN: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=2462059>