Criteria for the registration of expert resources in Switzerland

Introduction:

The Orphanet database publishes data on services and research for rare diseases of around 40 countries in the world. In Europe, a disease is considered to be rare when it affects not more than 1 person per 2,000 in the European population (Regulation (EC) N°141/2000 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 1999 on orphan medicinal products).

Data collection, validation and publication is ruled by the Orphanet Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). For general information related to the Orphanet mission and activities, please consult the following document intended for Orphanet national teams and Orphanet users: https://www.orpha.net/orphacom/special/eproc_SOPs.pdf.

The Orphanet coordinating team is located in Paris, France (INSERM). Orphanet national teams are located in each participating country. In Switzerland, the Orphanet National Team is hosted by the University Hospitals Geneva (HUG).

The national team is responsible for the collection, registration, validation, publication and update of the Swiss collected data. The team is coordinated by a national coordinator.

A request for registration of data can be made by contacting the Orphanet Swiss team at the following email address: **« contact@orphanet.ch »**

The purpose of the present document is to explain how data on expert resources (expert centres, medical laboratories and diagnostic tests, patient organisations, research projects, clinical trials, registries and biobanks) are collected at the level of Switzerland. It also enlists definitions of each expert resource as well as the main sources of information used for the different types of data.

Types of data on services and research registered with Orphanet:

1. Rare disease expert centres (a genetic counselling clinic, a medical management clinic or both)

2. Patient organisations

3. Patient registries

4. Clinical trials

5. Research projects

6. Biobanks

7. Diagnostic tests and Quality data of laboratories (accreditations, External Quality Assessments)

1. EXPERT CENTRES IN ORPHANET

The procedural document on data collection and registration of expert centres in Orphanet can be found here: https://www.orpha.net/orphacom/cahiers/docs/GB/eproc_expert_centres_R2_PatCar_Cns_EP_02.pdf

A. DEFINITIONS

A medical management expert centre on rare diseases **is**:

- A specialised centre for a rare disease (or a group of rare diseases) organized for the medical management of patients or organized as an expert centre for consultation. Centres of expertise mentioned in Orphanet should deliver a service of indisputably higher quality for rare diseases than a standard hospital service in the relevant speciality. This data is intended to contribute to appropriate referrals of patients towards expert centres, to ease the process of second opinions between professionals, and to establish reference networks.

A medical management expert centre on rare diseases **is not**:

- A conventional specialised medical department without specific focus on rare diseases, even if it is a reputed one;
- A self-declared centre that does not fulfil the quality standard criteria.

A genetic counselling expert centre on rare diseases **is**:

- A centre delivering genetic advice either for all rare genetic diseases or for a rare genetic disease/group of diseases.

A genetic counselling expert centre on rare diseases **is not:**

- A self-declared centre as a genetic counselling centre with no formal validation.

A network of expert centres **is**:

- A network of expert centres specialised in a disease (or group of diseases) with an official designation by health authorities in a country or specific funding from a well-established body.
- It can be national, European or International.

A network of expert centres **is not**:

- A self-declared network (same hospital or same disease without any funding).
- Clinical centres participating in the same clinical trials.
- Clinical centres with expert knowledge in the same field but without official recognition.

B. IDENTIFICATION OF SOURCES OF INFORMATION

For officially designated expert centres:

- Medical management centres:

kosek - Coordination Rare Diseases Switzerland (https://www.kosekschweiz.ch) and list of "**Highly specialized medicine"** centres concerning rare diseases from the Swiss Conference of Health Directors https://www.gdk-cds.ch/fr/

- Genetic counselling centres:

Centres having at least one professionnal with a specific title on medical genetics FMH (https://www.siwf.ch/fr/formation-postgraduee/titres-specialiste-formations/genetique-medicale.cfm#).
We consider University Hospitals eligible to be declared as officially designated centres for genetic counselling as all of them have a specialized medical genetic service

For non-officially designated expert centres:

- Learned societies, foundations and other networks.
- Expert centres involved in clinical trials.

- Scientific publications.
- Patient organisations.
- Websites of Human Genetics societies (for genetic counselling centres).
- Pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies involved in orphan drugs.
- Professionals declaring an expert centre through the Orphanet online registration service.

2. PATIENT ORGANISATIONS IN ORPHANET

The procedural document on data collection and registration of patient organisations in Orphanet can be found here: https://www.orpha.net/orphacom/cahiers/docs/GB/patient_org_R2_PatCar_PO_EP_09.pdf

A. DEFINITIONS

A patient organisation on rare diseases **is:**

- A non-profit active organisation or foundation which provides support and/or information to patients suffering from a rare disease or a group of rare diseases with statutes (Swiss Civil Code: article 60).

- Patient organisations on non-rare diseases also dealing with rare forms of common diseases, or with disabilities, are to be included if there is no specific organisation.

- Orphanet lists national patient organisations as well as European and international organisations based in Europe. Regional patient organisations may also be registered in the database if there is no national equivalent or if they are independent. Also rare-diseases-specific sub-sections/contact groups of general organisations are registered. Organizations not based in Europe but covering a disease or a group of diseases not covered by a European organisation are also registered including European contact points.

A patient organisation on rare diseases **is not**:

- A fund-raising trust/foundation that helps one/few patients with no real advice or help given to others.
- A research-funding trust/foundation.
- A learned society.
- A blog or/and forum only.

B. IDENTIFICATION OF SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The main sources of information are:

- National alliances. A collaboration has been established with **ProRaris, https://www.proraris.ch/,** the umbrella organisation for patients with rare diseases in Switzerland, in order to identify Swiss patient organisations not yet registered on Orphanet.

- Eurordis, the non-governmental patient-driven alliance of patient organisations representing 860 rare disease patient organisations from 70 countries. https://www.eurordis.org/.

- Physicians and researchers working in close collaboration with these support groups.
- Congress, symposiums, forums.
- A patient organisation or an alliance declaring their activity to contact@orphanet.ch.

3. PATIENT REGISTRIES IN ORPHANET

The procedural document on data collection and registration of patient registries in Orphanet can be found here: https://www.orpha.net/orphacom/cahiers/docs/GB/patient_registries_in_Orphanet_R2_R_D_regpat_EP_07.pdf

A. DEFINITIONS

A patient registry (or disease registry) on rare diseases **is**:

- Any kind of systematic registry of clinical data for clinical research on a rare disease or a group of rare diseases, as well as for rare forms of common diseases, governed by an identified body.

A patient registry on rare diseases **is not:**

- A study performed by recruitment of patient of a registry, i.e. clinical trial or clinical study.

B. IDENTIFICATION OF SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Patient registries are found through the Swiss platform for medical registries , the Rare Diseases Swiss Registry and also through research projects, networks, funding bodies, pharmaceutical and biotech companies, patient organisations, professionals, peer reviewed publications and Orphanews.

4. CLINICAL TRIALS IN ORPHANET

The procedural document on data collection and registration of clinical trials in Orphanet can be found here: https://www.orpha.net/orphacom/cahiers/docs/GB/Clinical_trials_in_Orphanet_R2_R_D_CT_EP_02.pdf

A. DEFINITIONS

A clinical trial on rare diseases **is:**

- An interventional study aiming to evaluate a drug (or a combination of drugs or a biological product, etc) or a medical device as treatment (or prevention) of a rare disease (or rare form of a common disease).

A clinical trial on rare diseases **is not:**

- A non-therapeutic clinical study.
- A therapeutic pre-clinical study (on animals for example). Observational clinical studies that could be identified are registered as research projects.
- A clinical trial on a common disease which has rare forms (e.g. Parkinson, breast cancer, etc.).
- A clinical trial evaluating an intervention other that a drug or medical device (e.g. surgery, behavioural therapy, etc.).

B. IDENTIFICATION OF SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The Orphanet coordinating team is in charge of the centralized collect of clinical trials through a partnership with the International Clinical Trial Register Platform (ICTRP) http://apps.who.int/trialsearch/. This platform, supported by the World Health Organization, provides access to a central database containing the trial registration data sets provided by other national and international registries as well as links to the full original records.

The ICTRP database centralises data on clinical trials provided by other national and international registries such as:

- The European Clinical Trials Database (EudraCT) https://eudract.ema.europa.eu/
- Clinical trials.gov https://clinicaltrials.gov/

ICTRP is the major source of information but clinical trials can also come from professionals' self-declarations and national watch. Therefore, national teams are in charge of identifying the other relevant sources of information for clinical trials in their country, in order to complete the centralized collect of clinical trials.

KOFAM, The Coordination Office for Human Research and operated by the Federal office of Public Health (FOPH) is the database of clinical trials in Switzerland. The clinical trials portal **SNCTP (**Swiss National Clinical Trials Portal) publishes clinical trials in Switzerland and has a specific « orphan rare diseases » research tab. Link: https://www.kofam.ch/en/snctp-portal/searching-for-a-clinical-trial/

5. RESEARCH PROJECTS IN ORPHANET

The procedural document on data collection and registration of research projects in Orphanet can be found here: https://www.orpha.net/orphacom/cahiers/docs/GB/Data_collection_and_registration_of_research_projects_R2_R-D_RP_EP_04.pdf

A. DEFINITIONS

A research project in Orphanet **is**:

- A research project explicitly focused on a rare disease or a group of rare diseases. It is either funded by a funding body (public or private, for or not-for-profit) with a scientific committee (after competitive evaluation) or by the regular funding of a research institution.

A research project on rare diseases **is not:**

- A study on general aspects of a common disease which has rare forms (Parkinson disease, Alzheimer disease, breast cancer, etc).
- A study on non-rare diseases.
- A study that could one day be applicable in the field of rare diseases but without explicit intention.
- A study that has already been published e.g. with the label of the study being the title of the article in PubMed.
- A study that is too fundamental: no specific disease or general title including some rare diseases as examples.

A network of research projects **is:**

- A collaborative research project funded by an international funding agency or transnational program (i.e. the Framework Programme of DG Research or E-Rare), clinical networks funded by DG Sanco, a multinational non-therapeutic clinical research study, a network of experts (such as Treat-NMD, ECORN-CF, PRINTO), or a network of clinical investigation centres.

A network of research projects **is not**:

- An informal network, a network not funded.

B. IDENTIFICATION OF SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The coordinating team collects projects funded by IRDiRC (International Rare Diseases Consortium) members at the European level.

National teams are in charge of identifying the sources of information for research projects on rare diseases in their country. Orphanet Switzerland has an ongoing collaboration with the SNSF the Swiss national Science Foundation (https://www.snf.ch/)

Projects can be found in websites of funding bodies, patient organisations, public research organisations, etc. They are also obtained via professionals declaring their activity to contact@orphanet.ch.

6. BIOBANKS AND VARIANT DATABASES IN ORPHANET

The procedural document on data collection and registration of biobanks in Orphanet can be found here: https://www.orpha.net/orphacom/cahiers/docs/GB/Biobanks_in_Orphanet_R2_R_D_BB_EP_08.pdf

A. DEFINITIONS

A biobank on rare diseases **is:**

- Any kind of systematic, open-for-collaboration register of biological specimen for clinical research with a clear orientation toward the field of rare diseases.

A biobank on rare diseases **is not**:

- A collection of biological material with no specificity but that might be useful in the field of rare diseases;
- A private, not open for collaboration, collection.

A variant database on rare diseases **is**:

- A systematic data collection of variants described as responsible for a rare disease (or group of rare diseases) with an online interface, governed by an identified body

A variant database on rare diseases **is not:**

- A collection of gene variants without an associated phenotype;
- An empty database associated with a project of data collection on gene variants.

B. IDENTIFICATION OF SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The coordinating team selects lists from websites, such as EuroBioBank (http://www.eurobiobank.org/), BBMRI (http://www.bbmri.eu/) and collects biobanks that have been established thanks to EU-funded networks.

National teams collect biobanks and variant databases dedicated to rare diseases at the national level.

7. DIAGNOSTIC TESTS AND QUALITY DATA OF MEDICAL LABORATORIES IN ORPHANET

The procedural document on data collection and registration of diagnostic tests in Orphanet can be found here: https://www.orpha.net/orphacom/cahiers/docs/GB/Dgs_R2_PatCar_Dgs_EP_04.pdf

A. DEFINITION

A diagnostic test in Orphanet **is:**

- A biological analysis performed in a clinical setting to diagnose or confirm the diagnosis of a rare disease or a group of rare diseases, to test the responses to therapies or to assess the likelihood of developing a specific condition based on a genetic risk (only tests requiring specific technical competence may be included)

- A constitutional genetic test, whatever the disease prevalence (as Orphanet is the reference database for genetic testing in Europe, molecular genetic tests covering non-rare diseases are also collected but not published online)

B. IDENTIFICATION OF SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Authorised (https://www.bag.admin.ch) and accredited (https://www.sas.admin.ch/) laboratories are listed by the **OFSP Federal Office of Public Health.**

Since these sources do not allow an exhaustive coverage of the testing activity in Switzerland, the national team is in charge of identifying the laboratories in the country performing diagnostic tests and invite them to declare and update their activity.

An additional source of information is the list of laboratories participating in External quality assessment (EQA) schemes, obtained by the Orphanet coordinating team through a partnership established with three EQA providers (CF Network, EMQN and CEQAS). This list is sent to the national teams once received from the providers