How will the NI bring added clinical and research value, over and above, the good work that already exists within constituent Depts and Units?

One possible answer is the establishment of cross-cutting themes. Proposed criteria for such themes are: 1) clinical relevance, 2) critical mass, 3) competitive advantage, 4) cross-disciplinarity, and 5) being on the cutting-edge (5c).

Cross-cutting themes that have been proposed and/or publically workshopped are 1) brain injury, 2) HIV/AIDS, 3) neurodevelopmental/degenerative disorders, and 4) neuro-inflammation.

These themes 1) meet our 5c criteria, 2) are relevant to our major GSH disciplines, 3) are relevant to our NI Fellows, 4) and can be investigated by key cross-cutting NI methods (e.g., neuroimaging, neuropsychology, neurogenetics, neuro-omics).

With the aim of advancing the NI, the MRC Unit on Risk & Resilience in Mental Disorders is putting out an initial request for applications for research grants up to R50K.

While the initial funding is from the MRC Unit on Risk & Resilience in Mental Disorders; other NI Depts and stakeholders are encouraged to match this amount, to allow better funding, and more diverse applications.

Fellows and others at post-doctoral or junior career levels are encouraged to lead. The idea put forwards should 1) clearly fall within one of the proposed NI themes, 2) should have co-investigators from different NI disciplines, 3) should help with preliminary data for a career/competitive grant (e.g., NIH K-award or R01 or Wellcome grant), which is a key medium to long-term goal, particularly of early and mid-career NI staff / students.

Short (1 page maximum) applications addressing just the specific aims, the co-investigators, and an outline of the direction of the career/competitive grant are due June 11 to Dan Stein (dan.stein@uct.ac.za), MRC Unit Director. Successful applicants will then be asked to submit a slightly longer proposal (with more detailed methods). The idea is to encourage proposals/collaborations (rather than extensive grant-writing). As the immediate source of funding will be the MRC Unit; there should be some reference to mental disorders/symptoms in the proposal.