Self-Assessment of the Operations and Functions of Research Ethics Committees in Developing Countries

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This presentation represents the opinions of the author and does not represent the opinions of the Egyptian authorities.
Agenda

- Situation of Egyptian Research Ethics Committees
- Self-Assessment of the Operations and Functions of Research Ethics Committees in Developing Countries
Research Ethics Committees in Egypt

Present in:
- Universities (Faculties of Medical Section)
- Research institutes
- Ministry of Health (MOH)
- Non Governmental Organizations (NGO)
Egyptian RECs

2006: 18 registered RECs (OHRP)

2011: 45 registered RECs (OHRP)

2011: 31 registered RECs (ENREC)

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Identifying structures, processes, resources and needs of research ethics committees in Egypt

(Sleem et. al, 2010)

Development of an accessible self-assessment tool for research ethics committees in developing countries.


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BACKGROUND/OBJECTIVE:

• In Egypt and other developing countries, many research ethics committees (RECs) have been established, but the quality of their ethics review systems remains unknown.

• A self assessment mechanism would provide RECs a way to review their policies and processes against recognize international standards.

• The objective of this study was to assess the feasibility and potential usefulness of this tool.
METHODS:

• Organizational aspects; policies, membership composition/education requirements; aspects of meetings, and resources.

• Each question was assessed a point value; maximum score is 200 points.

• We sent a web link to REC chairs from different regions of the developing world (Middle East, South Africa, Central & Eastern Europe, and India). Responses were collected anonymously.

• We used descriptive statistics and a one-way a nova test to analyze the data.
RESULTS:

• General

36 RECs completed the survey
64.0% were established during the last 5 years
91.7% had standard operating procedures.
36.1% were established under a high ranking authority;
RESULTS 2:

• Regarding policies,
  80.6% had a conflict of interest policy
  27.8% had a quality improvement program.

• Regarding membership/education,
  77% had a women/male ratio between 0.4- 0.6
  47.2% required members to have ethics training
  50.0% organized continuing education for its members.
RESULTS 3:

• Regarding meetings,
  94.4% required a quorum
  69.5% met at least once/month
  86.1% kept meeting minutes.

• Regarding resources,
  33.3% had its own budget
  88.8% had an administrative person.
RESULTS 4:

Regarding Total Score

The total mean score was 146.2 ± 34.1.

Mean scores from the developing regions with the three highest sample sizes were:

156.7 + 15.6 (n=14)
137 + 28.4  (n=16)
136.7 + 13.3 (n=3)  (p=.026).

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RESULTS 5:

• Regarding the feasibility of the tool
  
  ● More than 85% thought that the instructions were easy to follow and understandable; and that the survey will produce useful information

• 86.1% completed the survey in less than 1 hour.
Limitations

• Self-report
Conclusions

• Tool is feasible to use
• Provides feedback on limitations of REC’s “performance”, process indicators, and policies.
• Develop an improvement plan.
• Compare one’s REC against an aggregate mean.
Future

- Auto-calculation of the Score

- Anonymous code for each REC (keep Tracking)
Future

• Calculation of **Smart REC Score SRS** based on Aggregate mean scores every Country / year and another general one.

• Solicit feedback on particular items or adding new one.

• From Assessment tool to Accreditation tool
THANK YOU

Prof. Henry Silverman,
MERETI Director
University of Maryland

Prof. Azza Saleh,
ENREC Coordinator