



The WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean held a meeting of the Eastern Mediterranean Research Ethics Review Committee on 6–7 September 2015 in Cairo, Egypt.

The objectives of the meeting were to: review the Committee’s work in light of its revised membership; ensure compatibility of the Committee’s work with international guidelines for review of health research on human subjects; update the current review process for health research supported by WHO; and discuss new health research challenges in the Region, including health policy and systems research.

The meeting was opened by Dr Ala Alwan, WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean, who highlighted WHO’s role in supporting and promoting health research, as mandated by its Constitution. In 2014, he had re-formulated the Committee and included external members (Regional Director’s Circular 1105), with an essential function to review the protocols of all health research projects involving human subjects submitted to WHO for funding in the Region. WHO was working in close collaboration with other stakeholders in health research, including UNESCO, in the field of bioethics applications.

Following two days of discussions, the meeting concluded with recommendations for ensuring compatibility of the Committee’s work with international guidelines for health research, updating the ethical review process and providing special advice for current challenges in health policy and systems research.

In the closing session, the Regional Director highlighted the role and functions of the Committee in ethical conduct of health research funded by WHO in the Region. He emphasized the importance of collaboration with United Nations organizations working in the field of bioethics,

especially UNESCO, with special focus on supporting national bioethics committees and inclusion of bioethics in curricula of health sciences' colleges, and requested that the meeting's recommendations be shared with technical units and Member States.

[Summary report on the Meeting of the Eastern Mediterranean Research Ethics Review Committee, Cairo, Egypt, 6–7 September 2015](#)

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