

The WHO Regional Office carried out a situation analysis of bioethics in the Region, with special emphasis on health research to provide opportunities for further understanding of challenges and needs for observing bioethics and to identify areas of progress and improvement in bioethics for each country.

71 participants from 19 countries of the Region participated in the survey. The survey highlighted some key challenges that face countries in relation to level of bioethics education, high levels of illiteracy among patients, lack of resources, application of research ethics and monitoring ongoing researches, lack of coordination among different bodies, lack of bylaws/regulations and consistency of the regulation and practices between different institutions, and misunderstanding of the role of the research ethics committees.

The survey identified also some key challenges that face national ethics committees or similar governing bodies in the countries in the form of irregular convening of meetings, reporting and communications, lack of control and authority over institutional ethical committees and limited review of existing legislations to include emerging technologies.

The results emphasized the need to determine some key actions for further improvement of bioethics in the Region, including enhancing the role of civil society as a key stakeholder, establishing laws according to local needs and context, and developing/fostering a core bioethics curriculum within the health sciences' curricula of academic institutions and in-service training of healthcare providers in the Region.

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