



29 November 2020, Cairo – The Eastern Mediterranean Research Ethics Review Committee meets annually to discuss strategic planning and compliance of health research in the Region with WHO policies and international guidelines for research on human subjects. This year, the Committee held its meeting remotely on 17 November 2020 to align with COVID-19 infection prevention protocols.

The meeting covered many topics, including discussion on: progress in implementation of recommendations of the 2019 meeting [\[1\]](#) ; governance of WHO-funded research (RPPH and TDR) [\[2\]](#) ; the IBC/COMEST statement on COVID-19 [\[3\]](#) ; UNESCO recommendations on ethics of artificial intelligence [\[4\]](#)

; experience of WHO collaborating centre (Centre of Biomedical Ethics and Culture, Sindh Institute of Urology and Transplantation, Pakistan) in supporting bioethics; concepts and challenges of ethics and COVID-19 randomized clinical trials; global initiatives on ethics and the COVID-19 response and the upcoming 14th Global Summit of National Ethics/Bioethics Committees (tentatively scheduled for March 2022) [\[5\]](#)

The meeting concluded with a set of recommendations including:

- continuing support for research ethics/bioethics work in the Region, including: ethical review of WHO funded proposals, capacity-building via webinars and online platform/courses;
- encouraging networking among WHO collaborating centres on bioethics, ethics bodies and resources in the Region;
- supporting development and performance of work of national ethics committees;
- participating in and providing support to WHO's global/regional committees on ethics and the COVID-19 response; and
- fostering work with UNESCO on bioethics and research ethics in the Region.

Other issues covered during the meeting included:

- identifying the need to receive more information/knowledge on country situation on research ethics;
- improving the process of onboarding of new members of the Committee;
- improving the research ethics situation in WHO's Member States in north Africa;
- managing social media and ethics; updates and progress of the ACT accelerator [\[6\]](#) (focus on ethics);
- assessing the quality control of outputs of various ethics review committees in the Region;
- discussing migration ethics;
- improving the bottom up process on tackling emerging ethical issues;
- ensuring compassionate use;
- and improving regulation with the support of better ethics observation/ethical reviews.

The meeting was co-chaired by H.E. Professor Mohamed Saleh Ben Ammar (Tunisia) and Professor Gamal Serour (Egypt). Dr Nino Dal Dayanghirang (WHO Regional Office) was the meeting's rapporteur.

Related report

[Summary report on the Annual meeting of the Eastern Mediterranean Research Ethics Review Committee](#)

Cairo, Egypt, 17 November 2020

[1] <https://applications.emro.who.int/docs/EMRPC046E.pdf> .

[2] <http://www.emro.who.int/rpc/grants/> .

[3] <https://en.unesco.org/inclusivepolicylab/e-teams/ethical-considerations-covid-19-responses-and-recovery/documents/unesco-ibc-comest-statement> .

[4] <https://en.unesco.org/artificial-intelligence/ethics> .

[5] <https://www.who.int/ethics/partnerships/globalsummit/en/> .

[6] <https://www.who.int/initiatives/act-accelerator> .

Sunday 5th of May 2024 09:58:43 AM