

Code of Ethical Practice in Human Biomedical Research

- 1 The credibility of human biomedical research with society is dependent upon the maintenance of the highest ethical standards in its conduct. Research is ethically justifiable only if it is scientifically sound and does not expose research subjects to unwarranted discomfort or risks without likely benefit to the advancement of biomedical science. Research should also abide by accepted moral standards within the community and be carried out responsibly, in ways that respect and protect the research subjects, and maintain scientific integrity to promote trust and accountability.
- 2 Researchers have a personal and non-delegable responsibility to ensure the ethical conduct of their research. This Code lays down principles and standards for ethical practice in human biomedical research in Singapore. Researchers should use this Code as a yardstick for their conduct and behaviour. In addition, researchers should have an understanding of research ethics, develop the knowledge, skills and attitude needed to manage ethical conflicts, and to consult with colleagues, ethics committees and other experts when ethical issues arise.
- 3 Researchers are to uphold the principles¹ fundamental to the protection of human subjects. In general, researchers are expected to:
 - i. **Respect persons** as individuals:
 - (a) obtain fully informed consent from subjects who are autonomous;
 - (b) accord due protection to persons with diminished autonomy and who are vulnerable;
 - (c) protect subject privacy and maintain data confidentiality at all times;
 - ii. **Strive to promote the well-being and safety of human research subjects**, protecting them from unnecessary risks, and never let the goals of research undermine this priority;
 - iii. **Abide by local laws, regulations, guidelines** and commonly agreed standards of **good practice**² on the conduct of human biomedical research;
 - iv. **Embody professionalism** by upholding integrity, openness, and a commitment to intellectual honesty in the conduct of research, and avoid any actual, potential or apparent conflict of interest;
 - v. **Exercise responsible custodianship** of resources under their charge and be a responsible steward in the use and management of those resources;
 - vi. **Treat all fellow researchers with dignity and respect**, and managing researchers under their supervision with care;
 - vii. **Observe the Code** in all respects of their professional lives.

¹ The principles as presented in the Belmont Report: Ethical Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of Human Subjects of Research are Respect for persons, Beneficence and Justice.

² The primary emphasis for the conduct of research should be to ensure due process for validity and reproducibility, rather than to focus on the results of the research.

COMMITTEE TO DEVELOP THE CODE OF ETHICAL PRACTICE IN HUMAN BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH

Chairman

A/Prof Chin Jing Jih
Senior Consultant, Geriatric Medicine Department
Tan Tock Seng Hospital

Members

Dr Aw Swee Eng
Director, Department of Clinical Research & Chairman, Institutional Review Board,
Singapore General Hospital

A/Prof Chong Siow Ann
Vice Chairman, Medical Board (Research), Institute of Mental Health

A/Prof Goh Lee Gan
President
College of Family Physicians Singapore

Dr Martin L Hibberd
Senior Group Leader/ Associate Director, Infectious Diseases
Genome Institute of Singapore, Agency for Science, Technology and Research

Prof Ho Lai Yun
Immediate Past Master
Academy of Medicine

Prof Lee Hin Peng
Department of Epidemiology and Public Health
Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, National University of Singapore

A/Prof Ren Ee Chee
Principal Investigator
Singapore Immunology Network, Agency for Science, Technology and Research

Dr Eugene Fidelis Soh
Executive Director, Research & Development Office
National Healthcare Group

A/Prof Yoon Ho Sup
School of Biological Sciences
Nanyang Technological University