

CHALLENGES OF IRB MANAGEMENT IN TANZANIA

Research Ethics Conference

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1. Evolution of IRB

- Started after Establishment of Code of Research Ethics set by Declaration of Helsinki (1964)
- Guidelines for Biomedical Research subsequently formulated for worldwide use
- Research review committees in several institutions initially concerned with scientific merit of research proposals
- Role of these Committees in ethical review intensified after formulation of “Guidelines for Health Research in Tanzania

2. Research Ethics Committees

- = Institutional Research Boards (USA)
- Established and operates as per:
 - Operational Guidelines for Ethics Committees that Review Biomedical Research (TDR/PDR/ETHICS/2000.1)
 - Guidelines on Ethics for Health Research in Tanzania (ISBN 9987 675 018)

3. Rules

- Contribute to safeguarding the dignity, rights, safety, and well-being of research participants
- Uphold principles of autonomy, beneficence and justice
- Provide independent, competent and timely review of ethics of proposed studies
- Carryout regular evaluation of the ethics of ongoing studies

4. Function

- To review proposals to be conducted within or by institutions in Tanzania
- To issue research clearance for proposals which do not involve foreign researchers or collaborators
- Sends all research proposals involving foreign researchers or collaborators to NIMR for clearance by Medical Research Coordinating Committee (MRCC)

5. Challenges

- Most IRECs operate under difficult conditions mainly due to:
 - Little funding
 - Few administrative/review staff
 - Inadequate bioethics training for IREC members
 - Communities participating in research not sensitized to research ethical issues
 - Lack of clear legal framework
- Differences in interpretation and adoption of Guidelines by different researchers in multilateral research
 - e.g. – Informed consent procedures
 - dissemination of research findings
 - availability of products
 - Archived specimens