

COVENANT HEALTH RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Policy Guidelines

The major duties of the University Ethics committee are as to:

- Identify credible leadership for CHREC
- Provide educational opportunities for CHREC Chairperson designate
- Develop Training programs to educate the University community on ethical principles and benefits of a well constituted and internationally recognized Institutional Review Board (IRB)
- Support capacity building and motivate new leadership in Biomedical-Ethics
- Promote education on ethical principles and all stages of developing a research project such as:
 - Proposal writing
 - Informed consent
 - Data integrity
 - Plagiarism
 - Conflict of interest in Medicine and management
 - Constituting an Ethics/IRB Board
 - Developing policies and procedures for IRB function
 - Effective management of IRB meetings
 - Securing IRB registration and Federal-wide assurance

Membership

There would be a Chair of the constituted CHREC. The choice of the membership of the committee shall be carefully considered based on some knowledge of the degree of ethics training and interest in ethics by faculty members. The University or an outside legal non-institutional member and 2 laypersons may be added to the team. Membership would be multidisciplinary with clinicians, basic scientists, one lawyer, one statistician, one social scientist and pharmacist included. There shall be a strong bias in favor of physicians in different disciplines including pediatrics, medical microbiology, dentistry, radiology, and medical oncology.

Scientists such as hematologist/geneticists, social scientists, public health specialists and other professionals such as nurses, pharmacists, lawyers, ethicists, clergy, and laypersons may be included to represent the cultural and moral values of the community. Membership could be between 11 and 21

with four statutory members (Chair, Co-Chair-Chairman Medical Advisory Committee, Legal Officer and Statistician). Efforts shall be made to maintain gender balance on the committee. The membership term shall be set at 2-years with renewable membership allowed.

Leadership Training for the Chair and members

To improve the knowledge of ethical principles and the operations of institutional review boards, support should be provided for the Chair of CHREC to attend series of training workshops in Institutions with functioning IRBs/ERBs both in Nigeria and outside Nigeria.

The Chair/members shall participate in mock IRB/ERB sessions as well as in real IRB sessions at such institutions (universities and research institutes). Several educational courses offered via the Internet will also be useful in supplementing the Chair/members education in all relevant aspects of effective running of an ERB office. Locally organized training shall be made available to the initial and subsequent core group of members of the Committee.

Capacity Building in Biomedical Ethics

Capacity building training sessions and workshops shall be organized for the newly constituted committee members at quarterly intervals in the first year. The educational programs and workshops shall cover topics such as

- proposal writing
- informed consent
- data integrity
- plagiarism
- conflict of interest in research and management of patients
- constituting an IRB
- developing policies and procedures for IRB function
- intellectual property rights
- effective management of IRB meetings

Securing IRB registration and Federal-Wide Assurance from the National Institutes of Health in the United States of America (USA).

The workshops and seminars are usually daylong and shall include formal presentations by experts in the relevant areas of interest, followed by focus group discussions and breakout sessions to discuss specific and practical ethical issues in small groups prior to reconvening and coming to consensus. The implications for research, protection of patients' rights and informed consent would be stressed during all phases of the training.