

Professional ethics

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Outline

- Professional ethics
- Conflict of interest
- Misconduct

Do we really operate professionally

Professional ethics in health research is about

- The expectation that researchers and other stakeholders in the research process- including the ethics committee members, sponsors, and funders
- will act with integrity and honesty**
- It covers a broad spectrum of activities and expectations for moral and appropriate behavior

Example: When a research article is published

- Expectations on published work: it is fair to expect at the very least, -that the data has not been fabricated, etc., etc.;
- that the results are correctly reported;
- Disclaimers about conflict of interest are complete and correct;
- And that a thorough and impartial ethical review of the protocol took place before the study began;
- And that authorship is properly attributed to those who contributed their work. (Moral)

integrity

- If any of these expectations are not met,
 - the integrity of the research could be called into question
 - Along with the ability and the interest of the regulatory and professional bodies to govern research activities with the necessary vigor

Example: professional-conduct

Expectations for Appropriate behavior:

- Whereas some behavior is clearly wrong and insupportable, other behavior might be difficult to identify
 - Issues of abuse, harassment, intimidation of colleagues and or research participants
 - At what point does funding from a pharmaceutical company bias or compromise scientific judgment?

Two broad Areas of Professional ethics

- **Conflicts of interest**
- **Scientific misconduct**

Conflicts of interest

- Conflicts of interests are now regarded as ethical issues,
- In regulation of business and legal relationships that are based on trust, conflicts of interests are familiar
- but their application to medicine, in particular in health research is not yet well conceptualized
- Sharp differences of opinion exist both in the specialized literature and among scientists and ethicists
- over what counts as a conflict of interest and in what circumstance a conflict should be regarded as an ethical problem.

Scientific misconduct

- Like fraud and crime, scientific misconduct is usually hidden by those who perpetrate it
- Since it can undermine the potential of health research to add to human knowledge and improve the well being of future patients, scientific misconduct must be considered if it is relevant to the ethical evaluation of the proposed research

RECs and conflicts of interest

- Guidelines do not prohibit financial payments to RECs
 - user application fees
 - Commercial RECs
- CIOMS Guideline 2 : the review committees must be independent of the research team, and any direct financial or material benefit they may derive from the research should not be contingent on the outcome of the review

discussion

- Thank you for listening