

## Code of Ethical Practice in Human Biomedical Research<sup>1</sup>

- 1 Researchers should maintain the highest ethical standards in its conduct in order to be credible in society. Research should be scientifically sound and 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 responsibility to ensure the ethical conduct of their research. This Code lays down principles and standards for ethical practice in human biomedical research<sup>2</sup>. 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 principles<sup>3</sup> 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**<sup>4</sup> on the conduct of human biomedical research;
  - iv. **Show 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. **Be responsible** for 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.

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<sup>1</sup> This was adapted from the “Code of Ethical Practice in Human Biomedical Research”, developed by Ministry of Health, Singapore, in April 2009.

<sup>2</sup> The statement should be read in relation to paragraph 3iii, and is not intended to replace or preclude any applicable local laws, regulations, guidelines for research performed in any country.

<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> 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.