

[Subscribe](#)[Past Issues](#)[Translate ▼](#)[RSS](#)

Research Ethics | December 2017

[View this email in your browser](#)

## How can we get mentors and trainees talking about ethical challenges?

When it comes to research integrity, the international community often tends to focus on the incidence of research misconduct and the presumption that the remedy is to have more training in responsible conduct of research. Unfortunately, published evidence largely argues that these perceptions are demonstrably wrong. Specifically, training in courses and workshops is much less likely to be a factor in researcher behavior than what is observed in the context of the research environment (Whitbeck, 2001; Faden et al., 2002; Kalichman, 2014).

These research findings should not be surprising. Most of an academic or research career is defined by a researcher conducting research and working with research colleagues. The idea that a single course or workshop will somehow insulate a researcher from unethical or questionable behavior, or arm them with the skills to deal with such behavior would seem to be a hard case to make. That isn't to say that there is no value in such training, but the possible benefit is likely far less than what is conveyed by the research experience itself. With that in mind, the question is how, all things considered, can research mentors be encouraged to integrate ethical discussions and reflections into the context of the day-to-day research experience?

With this as a challenge, we have been testing several approaches at UC San Diego in California to move conversations about RCR out of the classroom and into the research environment. With support from the US National Science Foundation, this project began with a 3-day conference comprised of ~20 leaders in the field of re-

integrity (Plemmons and Kalichman, 2017). Our goal was to develop a curriculum for a workshop in participating faculty would acquire tools and resources to incorporate RCR conversations into the fabric research environment. Based on consensus from the conference participants, a curriculum was drafted, refined with input from experts and potential users, and finalized for pilot testing. Following two successful workshops for faculty at UC San Diego, the curriculum was rolled out for further testing nationally with interested faculty.

[Read more](#)

## Magical incantations and the tyranny of the template

### Building the Conversation

This month's addition to the Building the Conversation series reflects upon how institutional template consent material can have odd results/ill suited/nonsensical consequences.



What do you mean you don't understand and it's a bit long? I carefully followed my institution's consent template.

It is widely accepted that human research ethics committees (HRECs) devote much of their time to the review of plain language statements or participant information and consent forms (PICFs). It should be noted that, unlike the US, Australia's human research ethics arrangements have not been enacted into law. Chapter 2.2 of the National Statement does identify some recommended components of a consent strategy, but the number and specificity of provisions are much less than those often demanded by Australian research ethics committees. Historically, this amount of attention may have been due to the fact that, without guiding experience, researchers devised their own PICFs, resulting in a possibly bewildering variety of structure, grammar and expression. In more recent decades, the focus of pharmaceutical sponsors on maximising disclosure has caused much of the increased length and detail.

Probably in response to this variety and the increasing time devoted to review and the often detailed and even pedantic correction, HRECs hit on the idea of providing templates or standard forms for researchers to follow. The likely purpose behind these initiatives was to reduce the variety of PICFs and so in turn reduce the time that committees spent on them, correcting spelling, grammar and adding information the committees saw as being key to informing potential participants. An implicit message in the provision of standard forms and templates was that if researchers used these forms, it was more likely that the forms, and the projects, would be approved.

Probably in response to this variety and the increasing time devoted to review and the often detailed and pedantic correction, HRECs hit on the idea of providing templates or standard forms for researchers to follow. The likely purpose behind these initiatives was to reduce the variety of PICFs and so in turn reduce the time committees spent on them, correcting spelling, grammar and adding information the committees saw as being key to informing potential participants. An implicit message in the provision of standard forms and templates was that if researchers used these forms, it was more likely that the forms, and the projects, would be approved.

[Read more](#)

## Did you miss?

### RECENT BLOG POSTS

[Ethical use of social media as a recruitment tool](#)

[Ethical research with young children: Whose research, whose agenda?](#)

[A Model for the Participation of Indigenous Children and Young People in Research](#)

[Ethics and the Participation of Indigenous Children and Young People in Research](#)

[Dealing with “normal” misbehavior in science: Is gossip enough?.](#)

### RESOURCE LIBRARY

[Research reveals de-identified patient data can be re-identified – The Melbourne Newsroom](#)

[Renowned cancer scientist was paid by chemical firm for 20 years – The Guardian](#)

[COPE policy and procedure updates added to the resource library](#)

[Opinion: Where’s the data? Missing trial results undermine pandemic preparedness – Devex](#)

[Ethical issues in Alzheimer’s disease research involving human subjects](#)

## Calling all readers of #ResearchEthicsMonthly

Please encourage your colleagues and your social network to subscribe.

Please [follow AHRECS on LinkedIn](#).

You can this post and earlier posts at [www.ahrecs.com/blog](http://www.ahrecs.com/blog)



Do you know someone who hasn't subscribed yet to the Research Ethics Monthly? Please encourage them to subscribe now and help us grow this community



Got an idea for a post or a suggestion for a guest?

Send an email to [gary@ahrecs.com](mailto:gary@ahrecs.com)



Do you have a view, feedback or some constructive criticism on this or other posts? Every item has comment link so you can have your say and continue the conversation.



### RESOURCE LIBRARY

Have you checked out the resource library rec New items are added daily. There are separate sections for Human Research Ethics and Research In There are subsections for different categories of e.g. 'In the news' and books.

We hate spam and definitely don't want to be bother you with an wanted emails.  
[Click here](#) to change your subscription settings.

This newsletter is authorized by the AHRECS team, [click here](#) for contact and other details.

We would never divulge your details to anyone else, including not disclosing you're a subscriber, without your permission.

---

This email was sent to <<Email Address>>

[why did I get this?](#) [unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription preferences](#)

Australasian Human Research Ethics Consultancy Services (AHRECS) · 14 Sovereign Way · Samford Valley, Qld 4520 · Australia

The MailChimp logo is displayed in a white, cursive font within a grey rectangular box.