



# RESEARCH ETHICS MONTHLY

October/November 2019

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# Clergy service to HRECs: the useful paradox within secular governance of research involving human participants

Aviva Kipen, Union for Progressive Judaism and Progressive Judaism Victoria



In 2015, I earned a Doctor of Ministry Studies degree from the University of Divinity in Melbourne. The [thesis](#), investigating how 13 Christian and Jewish clergy experienced HREC service in their pastoral care roles, arose from my own human research ethics committee and Victorian Biotechnologies Ethics Advisory Committee service and extensive interfaith work. I had been mentored into my service to the Monash University HREC by the Rev'd Dr [Judy Redman](#), the then Victorian Uniting Church Outreach Ministries Coordinator. I found myself in the company of Anglican clergy and had succeeded Catholics – nuns and priests – Buddhist monks and also male rabbis who had served before me. Joining Judy, the serving female minister, made the gender issue less remarkable than it might otherwise have been, even in the late 1990s. The faith interchanges on succession raised my immediate curiosity that would later lead to the research question and the project on which this piece draws.

The then National Guidelines were clear: we clergy appointees were not there to push our own denominational barrows. Still, I became curious about what was really going on in the minds of others who served HRECs interchangeably from a range of faiths and traditions regardless of often-irreconcilable

theologies in the ‘pastoral chairs’. My interfaith work meant I was confident that, in the event of content matters being beyond my own repertoire, I would have an extensive network from which to seek expert guidance if asked to do so. But HREC appointment provides an opportunity to serve far beyond the specifics of faith content occasionally referenced in research applications.

I became aware that the recruitment of ‘the pastor’ in other committees was not always simple. I had been spotted at a meeting about chaplaincy in women’s prisons! How had others been identified and invited to join committees? What constituted their self-understanding of the ministry service being gifted to the committees they served? Would my interviews disclose any kind of ‘evangelism by stealth’? Did faiths or denominations target access to committees assessing large amounts politically/theologically/ethically sensitive, kinds of research?

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## Pondering on whether to submit your research output to a journal?

*The significance of how we talk and think about the **pachyderm elephant mammoth** in the room.*

Dr Gary Allen AHRECS Senior Consultant



The names we give things matter. The Bard may have been willing to allow a rose to stand in place for any noun, but he hadn't encountered

unscrupulous publishers.

Thanks to Beall’s List, over the last few years we may have been ready to declare that an unscrupulous journal was predatory. Prior to early 2017, many of us defaulted to Beall’s List to label a journal and its publisher as being naughty or nice.

Read more



# Fighting Fiction with Fiction: A novel approach to engaging the public in bioethics of medical research

Cathal O'Connell  
Centre Manager, BioFab3D, St Vincent’s Hospital Melbourne.  
[About the laboratory discussed in this post](#)



To the surprise of its inventors, the cochlear implant was greeted with [protest](#) by some in the Deaf community in the 1980s and early 1990s. This well-known story underlines how important it is for developers of new medical technologies to discuss the potential impacts from all possible angles, and in advance.

As a researcher, I am concerned by the public misconceptions around new technologies which might hamper meaningful conversation.



## While you are here...

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A few profiled items from the subscribers' area (the items listed below are also on <https://www.patreon.com/ahrecs>):

1. [Brainstorming - A Human Research Ethics discussion activity](#) - A discussion activity about the ethical conduct of research with brain organoids. A potentially fun and topical way to get novices talking about human research ethics
2. [Questionable publishers - Shell ppt with speaking notes for your modification | AHRECS version with embedded audio by Mark Israel. Material includes a further reading sheet](#) - A research integrity professional development resource
4. [Talking about data sharing in research integrity professional development and resource material: A commentary on a Nature piece and reflecting on the epochs of ways of discussing data sharing](#) - A Research Integrity and Human Research Ethics Commentary
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- The internal Ethics Review Panel of the Department of Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business (Commonwealth)



- [Torrens University](#)
- University of Melbourne
- [University of Southern of Queensland](#)
- University of Wollongong Ethics Unit
- [5 researchers who asked to remain anonymous](#)

## Things You May Have Missed...

### Our Resource Library

1. [Repairing an Institutional Reputation Tarnished by Fraudulent Publishing](#) - Scholarly Kitchen
2. [Scientists 'may have crossed ethical line' in growing human brains](#) - The Guardian
3. [\(Australia\) UNSW skin cancer researcher Levon Khachigian hit with string of retractions](#) – ABC News
4. [\(US\) Google and the University of Chicago Are Sued Over Data Sharing](#) – New York Times
5. [A publisher wants to destigmatize retractions. Here's how](#) - Retraction Watch
6. [Work of renowned UK psychologist Hans Eysenck ruled 'unsafe'](#) - The Guardian
7. [\(Australia\) An unauthorised survey delivered to students at the University of Sydney under the university's official logo asked them to rate the attractiveness and intelligence of Chinese people out of seven](#) - Sydney Morning Herald.
8. [For Vulnerable Populations, the Thorny Ethics of Genetic Data Collection](#) – UnDark
9. [When CVs Are Too Good to Be True](#) - Inside Higher Ed
10. [Fighting Citation Pollution — The Challenge of Detecting Fraudulent Journals in Works Cited](#) - Scholarly Kitchen

### Our Blog

- [Empowering and enabling participation in human research: Reflections from two Queenslanders living with Multiple Sclerosis](#)
- [Should we Reframe Research Ethics as a Professional Ethics?](#)
- [Ethics, Security and Privacy – the Bermuda Triangle of data management?](#)

- [The need to seek institutional approval to survey staff – was this a misunderstanding of the purpose of Guideline 2.2.13 in the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research?](#)
- [Smarter proportional research ethics review](#)
- [Should you be worried about paying children to take part in research?](#)
- [Proportional processes can sometimes be the answer to a few \(apparently competing\) problems](#)
- [The F-word, or how to fight fires in the research literature](#)
- [Research Ethics Review as a Box-Ticking Exercise](#)
- [We respect you... we just don't need to hear from you any more: Should the consumer and their community participate in research as partners instead of just being subjects?](#)



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