

Clinical Sciences and Clinical Research

Review Article

The Necessity of Ethical Clearance in Research

Nnodim Johnkennedy^{1*}, Dike Marycynthia Chinemerem¹, Ejiogu Chimnazaekpere Divine-Favour¹, Umeoka Emmanuel Chukwuemeka¹, Ndindu Ogazie¹, Okoro Peace Mmesoma¹, and Abiakwu Martina Chetachi¹

¹Department of Medical Laboratory Science, Imo State University Owerri, Nigeria

***Corresponding Author:** Nnodim Johnkennedy, Department of Medical Laboratory Science, Imo State University Owerri, Nigeria

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Abstract

In modern research that involves people, animals, biological samples, or sensitive data, getting ethical clearance is a must. It makes sure that research is done in line with established ethical rules that protect participants from harm and defend their rights and dignity. This study looks at the idea of ethical clearance, how it has changed over time, why it is important in medical and scientific research, how to get ethical approval, and what happens if you do research without it. Ethical clearance fosters accountability, honesty, and public confidence, consequently augmenting the legitimacy and acceptability of scientific enquiries..

Keywords: Necessity, Ethical clearance, Research.

Introduction

Research is very important for expanding scientific knowledge, helping policymakers make decisions, and improving health outcomes. It is the base on which new ideas in medical, public health, and technology are developed. Researchers use methodical investigation to gather evidence that helps doctors make decisions, changes health interventions, and helps create good policies. However, the quest for scientific advancement must never compromise human dignity, safety, or fundamental rights, notwithstanding its significant advantages. This moral issue is very important for responsible research practice and shows how important it is to have rules in place to protect study participants [1].

Before a research study may begin, an Institutional Review Board (IRB) or Research Ethics Committee (REC) must give formal permission for it to do so. This is called "ethical clearance." This permission is not just an administrative step; it is a crucial evaluation procedure in which proposed research is carefully examined to make sure it meets established ethical standards. Respect for people, doing good, and fairness are some of the main ideas that these standards include. Respect for persons entails acknowledging individual autonomy and safeguarding those with less autonomy. Beneficence ne-

cessitates that researchers optimise potential benefits while mitigating possible harm, while justice mandates equity in the selection and treatment of research subjects.

To get ethical clearance, you usually have to send in a complete research proposal that explains the study's goals, methods, ways to recruit participants, ways to collect data, and measures for managing risks. Ethical review committees look at whether the study design does a good job of protecting the rights and welfare of the people who take part. Issues like informed consent, privacy, and data protection are given special emphasis. Informed consent makes sure that everyone who takes part in the research knows everything about it, such as what it is for, how it works, what the risks and benefits are, and that they are doing it of their own free will. Confidentiality protects the personal information of participants by making sure that it is stored safely and only used for the research it was meant for [3].

Ethical clearance is of paramount importance in Medical Laboratory Science and other health-related fields due to the inherent nature of the research conducted. In these professions, students often have to work directly with patients, collect and analyse biological samples like blood or tissue, and

look at private medical records. These components provide potential hazards, encompassing privacy violations, psychological suffering, and, in certain instances, physical injury. Ethical clearance helps reduce these dangers by making sure that the right protections are in place before research starts. For example, there may be rules for safely managing and getting rid of biological materials, as well as for keeping data reporting anonymous [4].

Ethical clearance is important for more than just protecting participants; it is also important for keeping scientific research honest and credible. People, scientists, and policy-makers are more inclined to believe research that follows ethical guidelines. On the other hand, studies that don't have ethical approval run the danger of being seen as unreliable or unethical, no matter what their results are. As a condition for publishing or financial assistance, many academic journals and funding organisations need proof of ethical clearance. This need strengthens the notion that ethical adherence is a fundamental aspect of superior research [5].

Also, ethical clearance makes researchers more responsible. By having impartial reviewers look over study proposals, it makes ensuring that researchers are responsible for the ethical consequences of their work. This responsibility creates a culture of honesty and professionalism in the scientific community. It also makes researchers think carefully about how their studies might affect the people who take part and society as a whole, which leads to more considered and responsible research practices [6].

Ethical clearance also helps to protect vulnerable groups, such kids, the elderly, and people who can't make decisions for themselves. These populations may be more likely to be exploited or hurt in research settings, thus ethical review processes contain specific steps to protect them. For instance, more steps may be needed to get consent, such getting permission from guardians or legal representatives [7].

Ethical clearance is a key part of how research is done today. It makes sure that scientific research is done in a way that respects people, protects participants, and follows the greatest standards of honesty. Ethical compliance is essential, especially in Medical Laboratory Science and other health-related fields, since research frequently entails sensitive data and biological materials. Researchers safeguard participants and elevate the legitimacy, trustworthiness, and societal significance of their work by prioritising ethical considerations.

A Brief History of Research Ethics

The need for ethical clearance in research arose from historical cases where individuals experienced damage without their agreement. Some well-known instances are unethical human testing during World War II and other controversial trials that weren't properly supervised for ethics. These instances made it clear that we need standardised ethical rules for research right away [8].

In reaction, the Nuremberg Code and the Declaration of Helsinki were created as international standards. These

rules stress important moral values like fairness, voluntary engagement, informed consent, and doing good for others. They also stress that researchers should put the well-being of participants ahead of scientific or social goals.

These foundational publications resulted in the establishment of Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) and Research Ethics Committees (RECs), which are now essential elements of the research process. These groups are in charge of looking over study ideas to make sure they follow ethical guidelines before giving their approval [9].

Significance of Ethical Clearance

Ethical approval is very important for research for a number of reasons. First and foremost, it protects participants from physical, psychological, social, and legal harm by making sure that risks are as low as possible and benefits are as high as possible. Researchers must carefully look at and explain any possible dangers that their studies might pose as part of ethical review processes [10].

Second, ethical clearance makes sure that participants give their informed permission. This means that people know enough about the research's objective, methods, any dangers and rewards, and their right to leave at any time without punishment. This procedure honours the participants' freedom and worth.

Also, ethical clearance makes study results more credible and acceptable. Most of the time, academic journals, funding agencies, and research organisations want proof of ethical approval before they will publish a piece or give money to a project. Without such approval, even scientifically sound investigations may be denied [11].

Ethical clearance also makes research more open and accountable. By having impartial reviewers look at study ideas, it makes sure that studies are done properly and in line with set criteria. This, in turn, helps people trust scientific study and its results [12].

Steps To Getting Ethical Clearance

Getting ethical clearance requires a careful and organised approach. Researchers must provide a comprehensive research proposal to an ethical committee for evaluation. This proposal usually has the study's goals, research design, methodology, ways to recruit participants, ways to get informed permission, ways to preserve data, and plans for risk assessment [13].

The ethics committee checks the proposal to make sure it follows ethical rules and that there are enough protections in place for the people who will be taking part. Researchers are often required to modify certain elements of their study to mitigate ethical issues prior to receiving approval [14].

Before data gathering can begin, it is important to have ethical clearance. Doing research without permission first is a significant breach of research ethics. Also, if there are any major changes to the study protocol after it has been approved, the ethical committee usually needs to examine and

approve it again.

Many institutions now use digital platforms to submit and approve ethical proposals because technology has improved efficiency and accessibility. The basic rules that govern ethical evaluation, on the other hand, have not changed [15].

What Happens When You Do Research Without Ethical Clearance

Researchers and subjects can face harsh consequences if they do study without getting ethical approval first. Researchers may face disciplinary consequences from an academic point of view, such as suspension, expulsion, or having their degrees taken away. Funding organisations may stop giving money, and institutions may punish people who don't follow ethical standards [16].

Researchers may be legally responsible if participants are harmed by trials that have not been approved. This can cause lawsuits and damage to your reputation. The lack of ethical approval also makes study findings less credible, making them not fit for publication in renowned publications. For participants, the absence of ethical oversight heightens the potential of injury, exploitation, and infringement of rights. This not only impacts the persons directly engaged in the study but also diminishes public trust in research organisations and the scientific community at large [17,18].

In clinical and laboratory research, the absence of ethical approval can render study results worthless and undermine professional integrity, so obstructing scientific advancement.

Conclusion

Ethical clearance is an essential aspect of modern research methodology. It protects weak groups, makes sure that scientists act responsibly and ethically, and upholds human dignity. For students and professionals in Medical Laboratory Science, obtaining ethical approval is not just a matter of following the rules; it is a moral duty.

Researchers help make information that is credible, dependable, and socially responsible by following ethical norms. As research gets more complicated and covers more ground, ethical clearance will continue to be an important part of protecting participants and keeping the public's trust in scientific research.

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