

# Ethical Issues in Collaborative Research

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Ethics of  
Collaboration

Research  
Ethics

Ethical Aspects of Research  
Collaboration



# Why We Need to Participate in a Research Collaboration?

## Research Impact

Maximise research impact

- There is a positive correlation between the number of authors in a publication and their impact factor.

## Research Output

Maximise outputs. By combining expertise and resources you can answer bigger and more complex scientific questions and expand the breadth of your research.

- Two Heads are Better than One

## Funding

Attract funding. Generating outputs that have an impact on policy, practice, industry, or the general public can increase your chances of getting funded.

## Network

Expand your network. Working collaboratively can help you meet potential future employers, mentors, and collaborators.

## Embrace the New

Embrace the new. Collaborations are opportunities to learn new skills, make new friends, gain a new perspective, and join stimulating discussions and with experts in your field or complementary fields.



# Essential Ingredients of Collaboration



Effective  
Communication



Setting Baseline  
Goals and Objectives



Sharing and  
Assigning  
Responsibilities



Setting up Future  
Milestones of the  
Project



Rules and Norms for  
Sharing and Handling  
Data



Writing and  
Publishing Together



Disclosing and  
Settling Financial  
Interests



Informing Each Other  
and Following Rules  
and Regulations



# Factors that researchers see as essential in judging the merits of active participation in global health research collaborations

- Opportunities for active involvement in cutting-edge interesting science
- Effective leadership
- Competence of potential partners in and commitment to good scientific practice
- Capacity building
- Respect for the needs, interests and agendas of partners
- Opportunities for discussion and disagreement
- Trust and confidence
- Justice and fairness in collaboration.



Projects involving collaborators from more than one organisation can also create complications for ethics review procedures or create specific ethics considerations

# Essential Research Ethics in Collaborative Research



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- The research plan must receive prior review by an independent ethics review committee.
- Efforts must be made to minimize the risk to research participants.
- The research must involve a reasonable risk-benefit ratio.
- Adequate plans for the care and compensation of participants for injuries directly related to the research must be presented.
- Individual informed consent must be obtained from all participants.
- All participants must receive equal consideration and care.
- There must be an equitable distribution of the burden and the benefits of the research.



## Constraints for the application of ethical principles in less-developed countries (LDCs)

Ethical guideline	Constraint to application in LDCs
1) Prior review of research plan by an ethics review committee	Lack of experienced, independent institutional review boards
2) Minimization of risk to research participants	Population already living under high-risk health conditions
3) Reasonable risk-benefit ratio	Assessment of risk-benefit ratio may be biased by prevalent conditions
4) Adequate plans for the care and compensation of participants for injuries directly related to the research	Participants may not be aware they are entitled to compensation and may not report adverse events or injuries
5) Individual informed consent from all participants	Low literacy and other cultural constraints may prevent truly independent consent
6) Equal regard for all participants	Cultural or political restrictions to participation of women or members of certain social groups
7) Equitable distribution of the burden and benefits of the research	Incentives may draw participants disproportionately from poorest segments of the population





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“At a time of uncertainty, when societies across the globe take rapid and radical measures against the pandemic, I am concerned about potential threats to **human rights, privacy and ethical standards, especially towards the most vulnerable**. This crisis calls for the best in humanity with ethical principles as our compass.”

UNESCO Director-General, Audrey  
Azoulay



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