

ACON's Research Ethics Review Committee

Purpose and Role

- The Research Ethics Review Committee (RERC) exists to provide advice to ACON on ethical issues relating to community-based research and also to provide ethical guidance to researchers and research participants
- Research projects seeking ACON endorsement or access to ACON support and resources are required to have ethics approval
- ACON Ethics Committee approval is a prerequisite for consideration of assistance or support by ACON.

Rationale

- Encourage a process of peer review in relation to research involving GLBT, people with HIV, sex workers.
- Improve quality of research related to these groups, and therefore utility for health providers such as ACON
- Promote ethical conduct in human research among communities
- Ensuring beneficence

Types of assistance

Endorse the project	
Use premises	
Provide advice on recruitment	
Assist with distribution & promotion	
Provide input into methodology	
Act as a formal partner in research	
Other (please specify)	

Approval Process

- Committee members are community-based health professionals and researchers
- ACON's Ethics Committee meets on the third Wednesday of every month
- Decisions made by consensus – approve, approve after amendment or clarification made, deferred, declined.

Criteria for Assessment 1

Consideration and adherence to NHMRC's *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research*

Literature review/evidence base

Appropriate research methodology and procedures

Clearance/approval of institutional Ethics Committee – or evidence of approval being sought

Informed consent process/ Privacy/ Confidentiality

Benefit to community/ research participants

Position of researcher in regards to subjects and/or population being researched

Evidence of considered risk assessment

Criteria for Assessment 2

Evidence of community consultation in the development of the research proposal

Feedback to community

Contribution to body of knowledge

Cultural relevance

Use of precise and accurate terminology

Outcomes

	Total Submitted	Approved
2006	14	12
2007	29	23
2008	12	11
2009	24	21
2010	21	17
2011	12	10
2012	18	14
Total	130	108

Outcomes

Of the 108 applications approved since 2006;

- 21 completed and disseminated reports
- 13 completed, reported and presented
- 30 are ongoing (5 to report and present 2013)
- 8 were unable to complete
- 6 were extended into other studies
- 3 weren't started
- 10 lost to follow up
- 1 lost

Benefits

- Reassurance to participants of appropriateness and quality of research
- Support and advice to new/emerging researchers and in house research re methodology
- Benefit to community
- Identify research gaps

Guidance to staff re quality in research

Drawbacks?

- Time and resources to support
- Researchers have another process to go through
- Model can be or become inflexible
- Focus on ethics in practice diminished?