

The Contribution of the Kintampo Health Research Centre-Institutional Ethics Committee in Promoting Human Research Ethics among its research professionals.

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Problem/Issue Statement

The Institutional Ethics Committee of the Kintampo Health Research Centre is committed to conducting cutting-edge, multidisciplinary research; helping to train the next generation of leaders in bioethics; prepare trainees for the ethical challenges of professional and civic life and contributing to more ethical public policies regarding clinical issues, problems or dilemmas of clinical management and the human subject research. Due to this fact, it was necessary to create a training program aimed for research professionals.

Specific Challenges: Poor attendance at Institutional Ethics Committees events, inadequate preparedness of professionals to handle complexities that characterize justice and beneficence desirable for research involving human subjects and communities, limited resources, Professionals difficulties determining when projects constitute human subjects research activities.

Description of Program

Intended Outcomes: To achieve the proper training of research professionals at the health research centre so that they could develop their functions in accordance with national and international parameters applied in the field of research ethics and, therefore, safeguarding the welfare of those involved in biomedical research studies when implementing health research protocols.

In the light of the generally poor health delivery systems, the lower levels of education among research professionals and investigators became imperative. The IEC concluded that the training approach should be directed to the implementation of fundamental ethical principles and training in research methodology and, as a result, an initial training program in this area has been established. The training applied participatory approaches including overviews, case studies, and discussion groups and with special panels for some topics convened.

Evaluation: With the maiden training program organized, a total of 42 research professionals were trained (approximately 50% of all the members). In this sense, although it is still premature to assess the impact of this program, significant progress has been obtained, affecting directly the operations of the research centre.

Suggestions for Future Program Usage at Home Institution: This program is in a process of constant improvement, required to obtain its consolidation. Nevertheless, it is necessary to allow sufficient time for its implementation, and over all, to be clear that the results will be observed over the medium term.