Report

Topic: Research governance training and education survey - Researcher

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Background

Research governance and ethical review processes underpinning good quality research are often poorly understood by researchers, as evidenced by multiple publications [1,2,3] highlighting the effect of delays in obtaining appropriate approvals to commence research.

Objective

- investigate gaps in research ethics and governance training and education currently available for researchers.
- inform on training needs for development of a comprehensive training package.

Method / organisations / response rate

- anonymous online survey
- distributed to hospital/health services, universities and research institutes in Queensland.
- responses were received from 153 researchers.

Target audiences and expected attendance numbers

Guidelines/Acts/Frameworks

- Researchers were highly aware (>58%) of both the Australian Code for responsible conduct of research and the National Statement which underpins areas of research integrity and research ethics. However, more awareness is needed on ethical conduct in research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (27% reported competent and expert knowledge).
- More awareness is needed on both the Therapeutic Goods Act 1989 and The Privacy Act (1988), with only 16% and 31% respectively reporting above competent knowledge.
- While Good Clinical Practice training is mandatory in most organisations for principal investigators, only 40% report having competent knowledge.

Areas of research ethics, governance and integrity

- Experienced researchers report having more competent and expert knowledge in all areas of research ethics, governance and integrity.

Ethics

- Researchers have a high degree of competent and expert level knowledge with requirements for consent (79.2%) and how to consent to research (76%).
- However, when it comes unconventional modes of consent, such as the opt-out approach to consent and situations where a participant lacks capacity to consent, researchers are not as confident in their knowledge and understanding, reporting a higher degree of unaware/aware/ basic knowledge compared to conventional modes of consent.

Research Governance

- Just over 50% of researchers report that they are competent and expert in the site-specific assessment process.
- 20.8% of researchers report being aware of intellectual property. With a further 7.2% reporting they are unaware.
- 56% have basic knowledge with regards to managing project risk

Research integrity

- Approximately 77% feel competent and expert in their understanding of research integrity, whilst 21.8% report being aware or having basic knowledge and 1.6% report they are unaware or feel it is not applicable.
- Data is an area researchers report their level of knowledge and understanding as being unaware/aware/basic level. The specific areas reported mainly relate to data management and include:
  - consent to future use of data or tissue for research (51.2%)
  - making research data openly available (72.6%)
  - data storage (41.6%)
  - data collection (35.2%).

Attending training and mode of delivery

- The main barriers are time (32.4%) and dedicated days for training (13.8%)
- Other barriers to attending training reported were:
  - No training on offer or lack of awareness of opportunities
  - No tailored training in requirements for site specific assessment
- Face to face was the most favoured mode of delivery.
- Researchers favour one to one conversations (86.1%) and mentoring and coaching (74.6%)
- Video conference / training is the preferred method of online training delivery.

Outputs

- HTQ Research governance and compliance quarterly/bi annual newsletter, to include:
  - Links to resources
  - 'Hot topic'
  - Advertisement of up-and-coming meetings
  - National updates (e.g., One Stop Shop)
  - Promotion of guidelines, acts and frameworks relevant to research.
- Recommend to the National HREC Conference organising committee to include unconventional modes of consent in the conference program for 2023.
- Short bite-size sessions on:
  - the SSA process
  - managing project risk
  - intellectual property
  - data management
- Through the HeSANDA QLD node and the HREC Conference, provide information and awareness on the secondary use/sharing of research data in general and data management practices.

References

1   Duplancic, C., Crough, T., Bell, S.C. (2019). Intern Medicine Journal. 49(6):722-728.

2   White, V.M., Bibby, H., Green, M., Anazodo, A., Nicholls, W., Pinkerton, R., Phillips, M., Harrup, R., Osborn, M., Orme, L.M., Conyers, R., Thompson, K., Coory, M., (2016). *Internal Medicine Journal.* V46 issue 9, p 1023-1029

3   Buck, K., Nolte, L., Kelly, H., Detering. K., Sinclair, C., White, B.P., Sellars, M., (2020) *Australian Health Review.* Sep;44(5): 799-805

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