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LETTER TO EDITOR

Ethics in Clinical Trials

Muhammad Rafay Imran[1]

Sir,

With their correspondence to the human health and wellbeing – which is a major constituent in determining the socio-economic growth of the particular nation –, clinical trials hold immense significance in modern times. The invention and the potential benefits of any drug or medicine requires significant research and testing, both of which are achieved by clinical trials; testing being the pre-requisite and testing being the major aim of it. Hence clinical trials require testing subjects (humans), and with this requirement comes the need of medical ethics in research and trial.[1] Ethics, broadly, includes ensuring the well being of the test subjects; taking into account the unsaleable importance of human life. Declaration of Helsinki, Nuremberg Code, and Fair subject selection are amongst the most influential code of conduct in clinical trials.[2]

The aspects of ethics (the right to make informed decisions, equity, and Scientific validity) are global, no matter where in the world, they mostly follow the same principles. To keep a check on whether these principles are followed the research needs to be approved by the Independent Review Board; this is to remove any biasness or friction between opposing interests. These boards observe selection of subjects; are they eligible and is there is any vulnerability in the subjects that can enhance the potential risks? In addition, they also make sure that the risks are minimized (by using the default medicines present in Medicare already) to avert or minimize any possible adverse outcomes.[3,4]

Perhaps the most overriding facet of ethics is the 'informed consent'. A person (subject) must have the right to have the potential risks displayed in front of him, along with the societal benefits they can contribute to. After explaining the aspects, risks, benefits, methodology, and the purpose of the trial, the subject has the right to choose whether he wants to participate or not, and if participate then he also has the right to leave the trial during the procedure. Their privacy protection should be the team's top priority. In addition, the government's supervisory must be watchful of the above-mentioned criteria to ensure the ethical activity is uninterrupted.[5]*Al-Shifa Journal of Ophthalmology 2024; 20(4): 164-165.*

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Competing Interest:

None to declare.

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