AL-AZHAR DENTAL COLLEGE
(APPROVED BY DENTAL COUNCIL OF INDIA
& AFFILIATED TO KERALA UNIVERSITY OF HEALTH SCIENCE)
RUN BY NOORUL ISLAM TRUST
Perumpillichira P. O., Thodupuzha, Idukki Dt., Kerala - 685 605
URL:http://www.alazhardental.org E-mail- alazhardentalcollege@gmail.com

Office : 04862 - 224366
Chairman : 04862-229193
: 9447033439
Fax : 04862 - 229586

Date .....

Date: 19-06-2021

INSTITUTIONAL CODE OF ETHICS FOR RESEARCH

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The advancement of humanity is fuelled by research. The research method opens up new opportunities for education and literary development. Al Azhar Dental College's purpose is to encourage and foster research and innovation within the organisation. The ethics committee is crucial in determining the requirements for research ethics and ensuring that they are met.

The Al Azhar Dental College's institutional ethics committee's mission is to safeguard human subjects by guaranteeing the highest ethical standards and behaviour in all research projects. The concepts outlined in pertinent policies, guidelines, and codes of conduct have been taken into consideration when composing the Code-of Ethics for Research Practise. The research teams are expected to uphold the core ideals of research by maintaining the highest standards.

PURPOSE

The goal is to guarantee the highest ethical standards and conduct in all research conducted at the Al Azhar Dental College from the beginning to the end for the benefit of society and to protect any involved human subjects. It is the duty of all researchers to abide by institutional ethical standards and guidelines. Failure to abide by this policy could result in research projects being halted, funding from sponsors being withheld, and permission to publish.

SCOPE

This policy is applicable to anyone who conducts research within the institution or on its behalf. It offers a roadmap for eliminating any type of misconduct that might occur at any time and enhancing the caliber of research for better results.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The ethical principles of respect for autonomy, justice, beneficence, and nonmaleficence must be followed by researchers.

1. Principle of essentiality: The ethics committee (EC) should properly review any use of human participants, according to the first principle of essentiality.
2. Principle of voluntariness: The informed consent process ensures that participants' rights are protected by respecting their right to agree or not to agree to participate in research as well as their right to withdraw from research at any time.
3. Principle of non-exploitation: states that participants in research are fairly chosen, distributing the rewards and costs of the study without bias or arbitrary selection. There should be adequate safeguards in place to protect vulnerable groups.
4. Principle of social responsibility: The research is planned and carried out in a manner that should not interfere with social harmony in community relationships.

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5. Principles for protecting privacy and confidentiality: In order to protect the privacy of the potential participant, access to her/his identity and records is restricted to those who have been given permission. Since the right to life of an individual takes precedence over the right to privacy of the research participant, the confidentiality of the information may be compromised with the EC's approval for legitimate scientific or legal reasons.
6. Principle of risk minimization: At every stage of the research, all parties involved (including but not limited to researchers, ECs, sponsors, and regulators) exercise due caution to ensure that risks are reduced and appropriate care is taken.
7. Principle of professional competence: The research is planned, carried out, evaluated, and continuously monitored by individuals who are competent and have the appropriate and relevant education, experience, and/or training, according to the seventh professional competence principle.
8. The maximization of benefit principle: states that the research is planned and carried out with care to directly or indirectly maximize the benefits to the research subjects and/or to society.
9. The principle of transparency and accountability: states that, while protecting the participants' right to privacy, the research plan and results are made available to the public through registries, reports, and academic and other publications. Participants in the research should disclose and appropriately manage any conflicts of interest that may exist. To ensure accountability, the research should be carried out in a fair, honest, impartial, and open manner. For the necessary time, related documents, information, and notes should be kept around in case an audit or external review is conducted.
10. The totality of responsibility principle: states that all parties involved in the research are accountable for their actions. All parties involved are directly or indirectly obligated to uphold their professional, social, and moral obligations in accordance with relevant laws and ethical standards.
11. Principle of environmental protection: In accordance with current guidelines and regulations, researchers are responsible for ensuring the protection of the environment and resources at all stages of the research process.

RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT OF RESEARCH (RCR):

Values, policies, planning and conducting research, reviewing and reporting research, and responsible authorship and publication are all part of the responsible conduct of research (RCR).

All biomedical and health research must adhere to the ICMR National Ethical Guidelines, other pertinent regulations, and maintain research integrity in order to protect research subjects.

Before beginning any research, all researchers must receive approval from the Institutional Research/Scientific Committee (IRC), Institutional Ethics Committee (IEC), Central Drug Standard Control Organization (CDSCO), and Animal Ethics Committee. Clinical trials must be registered with the Clinical Trial Registry-I India (CTRI). Research should be conducted by qualified, competent individuals who have the necessary experience or training to gather reliable data, perform accurate analysis, interpret the results, and publish the findings.

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Researchers should only conduct high-quality, relevant research, hold themselves accountable for the results, and take necessary precautions to protect participants from risks while respecting their autonomy.

All COI must be disclosed by researchers, guides, and EC. COI: Conflict of Interest

Researchers should take precautions to ensure that any form of discrimination has no bearing on the scientific method.

Keep all research reliable, accurate, creditable, and confidential.

The investigator should safely store all raw data. All research levels should maintain confidentiality. According to regulatory requirements, research records must be kept for 3 years for biomedical and health research and 5 years for clinical trials.

Investigations are conducted fairly and in accordance with the law. Maintaining transparency and uniformity is important.

Additionally, researchers must submit their final report, annual report, and ongoing review to the ethics committee for review.

Mentors should set aside enough time to support and oversee their mentees' ethical research practices. They should also assume responsibility for the proper conduct of research.

Having the proper memorandums of understanding (MoU) and material transfer agreements (MTA) in place may be necessary for collaborative research.

PUBLICATION AND AUTHORSHIP:

No matter the outcome, all completed research must be shared and published on open databases, institute websites, and other relevant platforms.

Before publishing or sharing information outside of the institution, researchers must ensure the validity of their research findings.

Any kind Research misconduct (fabrication, falsification), plagiarism, self-plagiarism, misrepresenting other people's work, etc. will not be tolerated.

Before submission, all manuscripts must be checked for plagiarism using a tool that is open source and a report of the validated manuscript must be produced.

Researchers should adhere to the Committee on Publication Ethics' (COPE) and the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors' (ICMJE) publication ethics guidelines.

At the start of the project, all authors' contributions should be explicitly stated and justified. All those who have significantly and scientifically contributed to the research, including permanent as well as contractual/temporary staff, should be properly acknowledged as authors. Ghost writing and gifted writing are prohibited.

The articles should not be submitted to any predatory journal for publication.

RESEARCH MISCONDUCT AND ALLEGATION

Prof. Dr. Harvey Thomas MDS
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It is against professional obligations, detrimental to the research culture, and undermines the validity of research to not follow good research practices. Allegations of research misconduct can be reported directly to IEC with the necessary documentation and supporting evidence. If there has been misconduct, its severity and degree of plagiarism will be determined. A 2-3-member inquiry committee (one external) will be appointed in the event of a suspicion of research misconduct or allegation to assess the claim and make recommendations for the next steps, including levying punitive or disciplinary action against those found guilty. The investigation must be fair, transparent, and time-bound. The inquiry committee's final decision would be reached by either a majority vote or broad consensus. The investigation should remain private.

TRAINING

For newly hired/appointed scientific, research, and technical staff, regular trainings and workshops should be held to raise awareness of national ethical guidelines and other pertinent policies for research integrity and publication ethics. IEC provides all members with formal training on current amendments and guidelines as needed.

Prof. Dr. Harvey Thomas MDS
Principal
Al-Azhar Dental College
Thodupuzha-685 605

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Prof. Dr. V.A. AFZAL., M.D.S.
Principal
Al-Azhar Dental College
Perumpillichira P.O., Thodupuzha-685 605