

Research as a unit of the Medical Department

General Overview

The Unit intends to promote health care research within the hospital as stated in priority 6 of the Current Strategic plan of 2016/2021 to the highest standards of integrity in research. All projects involving the use of Human Participants, Animals and Biohazardous Materials are subject to review by the appropriate Hospital Research Ethics committee. Our Hospital REC has formulated policies for the conduct of research involving all three of these areas. The Unit is attached to the Department of Public Health and Research under the Medical Directorate.

It is the policy of the Hospital that researchers conducting research involving human subjects, animals and/or biohazardous agents must obtain approval of their research from the relevant ethics committee prior to commencing research activities.

Lubaga Hospital REC has formed strong collaborations with several local, national and international research groups who share our interests in several research areas. The Research unit is attached directly to the office of the Medical Director. The Unit is composed of Support Staff that provide consistency, expertise and administrative support to the Lubaga Hospital Research Ethics Committee and serves as a daily link between Lubaga Hospital Research Ethics Committee and the research community.

What is a Research Ethics committee?

This is a regulatory set up at an institutional level to carry out oversight of research. Its mandate is to review research proposals to assess formally if the research is ethical and its primary function is to conduct initial and continuing review of research projects, with the aim of protecting rights and welfare of human research participants. (in the past they used to be referred to as IRB's institutional research Boards however the National Council of Science and Technology a body that regulates all research in the country, changed their name to Research Ethics committee

It is important for Rubaga Hospital to have an IRB now a REC because all RECs operating in Uganda must be accredited by an accreditation Committee for Research Ethics based at Uganda National Council for Science and Technology. RECS have a special role of monitoring research activities to ensure compliance with scientific and ethical requirements in accordance with the established guidelines.

Where are we now?

Currently we have a 12 man committee and the head of Research is Medical Director, Dr Mulwana Johnie who replaced Dr Kibuuka Peter who changed office in May 2019. The new Chairperson Dr. Noah Kiwanuka an Associate Prof of Epidemiology and Bio Statistics from Makerere University School of Public Health.

The Management of the Hospital has trained the Research Ethics Committee team on basic research ethics as a requirement for accreditation. Lubaga hospital commitment to research has directed its

attention to the development needs of the unit - they have established a research agenda where the strategic plan has a list of items that are focused on developing research not only recently updated but trained the members who hold valid certificates in ICH_GCP Training course and Responsible Conduct of Research. The Hospital has established priorities and structures that promote ethical conduct and the communication with Regional National and international stake holders to help us develop into an institution that can write winning proposals.

The REC is in the process of being accredited to the UNCST following an application signed by the Executive Director in November 2019, accreditation to UNCST. The process is still on going

Performance on past agreed objectives

The tasks of the REC members are executed free of bias and influence. It provides independent competent and timely review of the ethics of the proposed studies. Committee subjects. The REC works to an extent that administrative Clearance is carried out most of the time. These are studies that have been approved by other Recs from other institutions. Our own studies and Studies from Students of our Hospital and other Training Institutions. Other studies carried out are approved by other accredited RECS. We have a number of Research Collaborations namely BD study, the TB Study in Public Health the WHO Study on Rota Virus and the Diabetes Study from Medical Research Council Entebbe .

Agreed at performance appraisal one of the objectives was to obtain/ subscribe to two online journals for the Resource Centre which would be helpful to the Doctors for the access and availability at the Resource center would be good. The time line was December 2019 and the support was to be provided by the Medical Director and the Finance team.

To have the REC accredited

1. Support at least 3 operational studies by the Hospital Staff
2. Sensitize staff about research through workshops and CMESs and invite UNCST for online training for the REC team
3. Attend REC meetings from Mulago Hospital and Makerere University School of Public health forums to shadow and acquire best practices

Throughout the year, the process of meetings has been slow because most studies are basically administrative, The Hospital has been very supportive by supporting the Team to train its members on the required Qualifications set up by the UNCST.

We need more support from the Chairperson on Meetings.

New Year Objectives

- Spearhead the process of the accreditation to UNCST process

To promote the reading culture. It is vital that all studies that need to be carried out in our hospital should be channeled officially through the Research office, for the hospital to grow and for proper monitoring of their activities. Some studies are going on informally and are not officially recorded. It was recommended to adhere to the guidelines of the Uganda National Council and Science & Technology. Research at our hospital is focused on Answering important health questions and translating new findings into benefits for patients and society. Within the hospital and utilize the Research unit

- To subscribe to current Medical Journals that would be beneficial to Doctors

Research Office needs to keep abreast of upcoming trends in research by internalizing the WHO guidelines and principles on Medical research. NIH provides support on scientific merit and innovation. Once accredited the institution will be in position to build capacity for research grants. Holding regular monthly or quarterly educational sessions on relevant ethical issues for not only REC members and hospital staff, but also patients.

- Setting annual goals for the ethics committee and regular evaluation of the steps taken toward their achievement
- Reviewing the policies proposed by the committee

Conclusion

It is hoped that these targets will be the basis for the future direction of the research unit activities and along with other team support the unit shall be developed into a stronger team that can even have the ability to write grant winning proposals.

The selection of a research design begins with the research question and the phenomena being studied. Just as different types of quantitative research designs exist to answer different quantifiable research questions, different qualitative designs exist to answer questions about the many different conditions of people's health, illness, and life experiences. Understanding the purpose of each research design assists nurses in selecting the best design for answering their research questions. Focusing the research question and enlisting the best research design to answer that question, is the first and most important step in conducting scientifically sound research whether it be qualitative or quantitative. Each builds the other and enriches nursing science and practice.

Scientifically sound, qualitative research studies often serve not only as groundwork for theory development but also for the design, implementation, and refinement of quantitative studies. While rigorous quantitative research studies often serve to identify the gaps in the literature and little understood phenomena in need of qualitative study. The ongoing interaction between these two approaches to knowledge leads to the accumulation of a broad array of research findings to help move nursing from tradition-based to an evidence-based practice.

The purpose of research is systematically identify what people want so that providers, regulators and policy makers can better meet their needs.

The current challenges are to:

- (a) To ensure good practices in Research
- (b) Collect the best preference and evidence for the decision of interest.
- (c) Educate more researchers interested in methods and evidence.