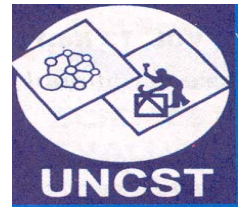




Alternative strategies for ensuring quality research ethics: the case of Uganda



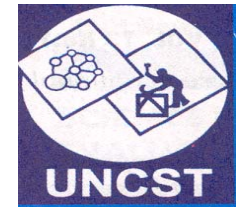
Julius Ecuru*,
Maxwell Otim*,
Leah Nwegulo* and
Jane Nabbuto*

Acknowledgements and affiliations

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- *Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST)



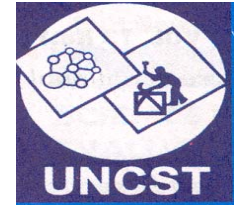
Objectives



- Enhance quality of ethical review of research projects involving humans as research participants;
- Promote networking (and information sharing) among Institutional Review Committees (IRCs);
- Provide learning opportunities for stakeholders in research ethics (IRC members, researchers, and the community).



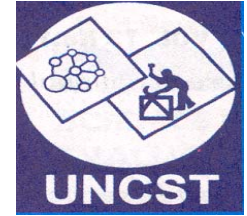
Methods



- Consultations through meetings and workshops;
- Review of policy documents; and
- Group discussions.



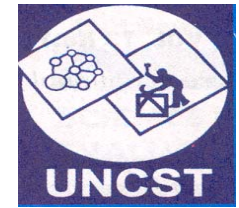
Results (1)



- IRC Accreditation Scheme established (July 1, 09)
Goal:
 - Improve IRC efficiency and effectiveness;
 - Ensure good ethical behaviour & practice
 - Build public trust in the oversight system
- A Network of IRC Chairpersons established (January 27, 2009)
Goal:
 - A forum for IRCs to discuss and acquaint themselves with emerging & contemporary issues in research ethics—leading to better judgements on research protocols reviewed
 - Current (2009) membership is 21 IRC Chairs & Administrators.



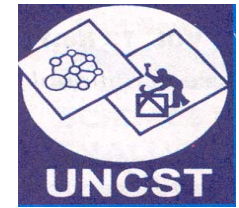
Results (2)



- Annual National Research Ethics Conference (ANREC) established (July 15, 2009)
 - 1st ANREC held from 15th -17th July 2009 in Mukono district, Uganda
 - 1st ANREC discussed ways to:
 - integrate ethical issues in research design & conduct;
 - engage communities in research; and
 - enhance scientific quality and ethical appropriateness of research projects;



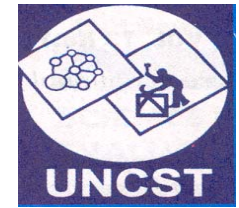
Discussion & Conclusions



- With 21 IRCs on board, and others in the pipeline, the establishment of a Network of IRC Chairs, the ANREC and IRC Accreditation Scheme will most probably improve credibility of IRCs, enable IRCs meet national and international standards for protection of human research participants, promote useful research, and ensure coherence in the national system of scientific and ethical review of research projects in Uganda.
- Rights and welfare of human research participants could be protected better by decentralizing ethical review of research to IRCs and providing good networking opportunities (e.g. establishing a Network of IRC Chairs & the ANREC), and setting up an IRC certification or accreditation scheme.



Future perspectives



- Improve quality of scientific and ethical review, ensuring transparency and predictability in the review process;
- Upgrade from guidelines into regulations, but maintain a proper balance between regulation and education;
- Increase networking opportunities –expand Network of IRC Chairs and ANREC to the Eastern Africa region.



Thank you

