

Addressing the Challenges of Conducting Research in Developing Countries

Dr. Roxanne Amerson, PhD, RN, CTN-A, CNE

Dr. Cecily Strang, PhD, RN



Presenters:

- Dr. Roxanne Amerson, Clemson University
- Dr. Cecily Strang, Presbyterian University of East Africa, Kenya & King University, Bristol, TN

Objectives:

- The learner will be able to identify at least 3 challenges for conducting research in developing countries.
- The learner will be able to describe at least 3 recommendations for adapting the procedure for informed consent when conducting research in a developing country.

Disclaimer: Research reported in this publication was supported by the National Institute of Nursing Research of the National Institutes of Health under Award Number RO3NR013228. The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of the National Institutes of Health.

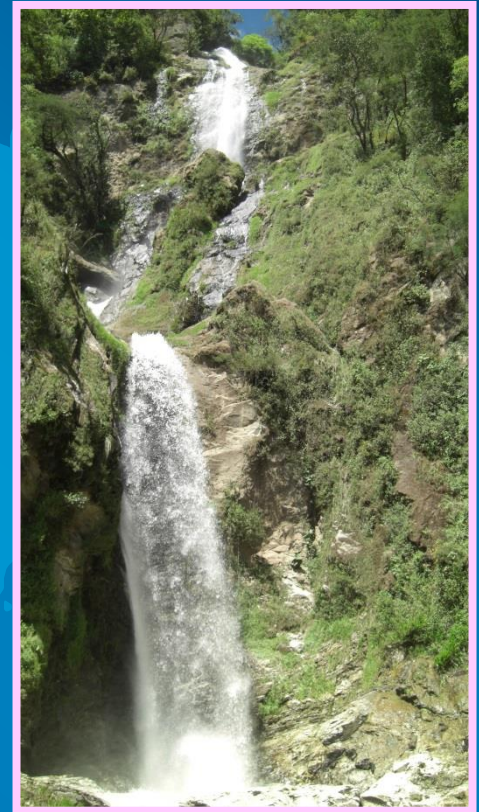
Introduction

- Research should be conducted in a manner that is appropriate for the unique community and the culture of the proposed research site.
 - Seems straightforward?
 - “Informed consent is the cornerstone of modern ethics, but it tends to lose its true meaning when put in the context of a developing country (Igoumenidis and Zyga, 2011, p. 247).”



Challenges

- Protecting the rights of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged populations
- Providing a relevant informed consent that is truly appropriate
- Conducting research in a culturally-appropriate manner for the host country



Background

- Declaration of Helsinki (1964)
- Informed consent presents many challenges
- Varied communication styles and languages
- Different gender roles and expectations
- A lack of formal education influences understanding



Phases of Research

Phase	Definition
Pre-enrollment	Planning to determine how to convey the meaning and protocol of the study, assess the community for issues that may impact the research study, and demonstrating respect of the potential research participants.
Enrollment	Informed individuals agree to participate in the study.
Post-enrollment	The research is underway and ensures continuation of the study. It may extend past the actual period of research.

(Woodsong & Abdool Karim, 2005)

Challenges of Research

Phase	Challenges
Pre-enrollment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A lack of formal education• Communal decision-making• Written consents• Language differences• Age of consent
Enrollment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unrealistic expectations of benefits and risks• Training for human research ethics for community members• Interventions may conflict with cultural practices
Post-enrollment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rumors may develop over time• Expectations of incentives

Recommendations

- Use independent reviewers from the host country, in addition to IRB
- Consult with advisory boards and focus groups
- Involve community representatives during the planning phase
- Anticipate problems outside the research protocol



Recommendations

- Allow the family to be involved
- Maintain transparency for incentives
- Monitor for rumors
- Share the knowledge gained with the community
- Consider Meleis's eight criteria for culturally competent scholarship throughout all phases of the research process



References

- Bhutta, Z. (2002). Ethics in international research: A perspective from the developing world. *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*, 80(2), 114-120.
- Igoumenidis, M., & Zyga, S. (2011). Healthcare research in developing countries: Ethical issues. *Health Science Journal*, 5(4), 243-250.
- Merritt, M., Taylor, H., & Mullany, L. (2010). Ancillary care in community-based public health intervention research. *American Journal of Public Health*, 100(2), 211- 216.
- McMillan, J.R., & Conlon, C. (2004). The ethics of research related to health care in developing countries. *Journal of Medical Ethics*, 30, 204-206.
- Stapleton, G., Schröder-Bäck, P., Laaser, U., Meershoek, A., & Popa, D. (2014). Global health ethics: An introduction to prominent theories and relevant topics. *Global Health Action*, 7, 23569.
- Woodsong, C., & Abdool Karim, Q. (2005). A model designed to enhance informed consent: Experiences from the HIV prevention trials network. *American Journal of Public Health*, 95(3), 412-419.