



RACGP

Specific Interests

Getting Started in General Practice Research Webinar: 25-9-19

Questions and Answers – Dr Susan Wearne

Ethics Committees

1. *For ethics approval then the College is the place to go?*
2. *My local university doesn't have a department of GP. I was wondering if you need to be connected in with a Uni to do GP research? I wasn't aware of RACGP's ethics committee - can we submit ethics for approval straight through this committee (rather than through the traditional method of ethics approval through a university)?*
3. *Where can GPs go for discussion with an ethics committee?*
4. *Is it necessary to get an approval from any authorities to proceed with a research?*

From the RACGP website, I found the following:

“The RACGP National Research and Evaluation Ethics Committee (NREEC) is primarily a research ethics committee with a focus on general practice research. As such, the committee will review all general practice related research proposals.” <https://www.racgp.org.au/the-racgp/governance/committees/national-committees/ethics-committee>

So yes, you can apply to the RACGP ethics committee directly without needing to go via a University. In general, getting advice from an experienced researcher or research team at a University, would also be a good idea.

I have also found the administrative staff who support the ethics committee at my University were very helpful with giving me advice.

In general, it is best to presume that research projects will need ethics committee approval. It can be a source of waste and disappointment to get part way through a project and then find you cannot use your data because you did not get clearance. I have usually found that the process of applying made me think more clearly about what I was doing and why, so it improved my work.

The National Health and Medical Research Committee website has useful information about ethics committees including a list of the ones currently operating in Australia.

<https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/research-policy/ethics/human-research-ethics-committees>

I also suggest people check the relative costs when considering which to use.

Mentorship

Is there any mentorship or educational course for methodology for IMGs to have more train and skills for GP research? I am interested in developing app for patient and Drs' education especially in palliative care

I don't know of any specific courses designed for IMGs, but many Universities will offer introductions to research either as face to face courses or on-line. If you are interested in palliative care, I'd suggest searching Australian Journal of General Practice to find recent articles published by Australian GPs who share this interest in palliative care. The November 2018 issue of Australian Journal of General Practice was on palliative care and might be a good place to start.

As was mentioned on the webinar, the RACGP faculty of special interests is considering how to set up a mentoring program. In the meantime posing a question via ShareGP is an option.



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Statistics

Is it possible to get SPSS statistical packages at a reduced rate for RACGP members?

Not as far as I know. Access to this is often included if you are affiliated with a university. I am not paid by Australian National University but do get access to the research tools I need, such as the library and reference library software (EndNote).

Melbourne based research group

Does the RACGP have a research group that meets in Melbourne?

Not as far as I know but Eastern Victoria GP Training and Murray City Country Coast GP Training both have active research programs, as do the GP Departments at Melbourne University and Monash University. The Australia New Zealand Association for Health Professional Educators (ANZAHPE) conference and Primary Health Care Research Information Service (PHCRIS) are great starting points for new resources.

And in terms of accessing SPSS, NVivo, Endnote and similar research programs – the best way to access is to become an adjunct and do some teaching at a University in GP – and you usually then can gain free access.

Journal Access

Is there any way to access a database of journals online? One of the difficulties I have with a literature review is that there is no way to access a good database of journals. When I did my Masters of Public Health I had access to 19000 journals through James Cook University but since completion I haven't been able to find any way to access such a database (the John Murtagh library isn't quite this comprehensive)

I share your pleasure at access to so many journals! The RACGP library is pretty good though, and they have often found specific articles for me on request, even if the college does not subscribe to the journal.

Thanks for the questions, and good luck with your research.

Dr Susan Wearne presented the webinar and answers these questions as an individual; statements made and views expressed are her, and are not to be considered those of her employer, the Commonwealth Department of Health.