

# **Irish College of General Practitioners**

## **Research Ethics Committee**



### **Calls for Expression of Interest for the ICGP Research Ethics Committee**

Research Ethics Committees (RECs) are a fundamental cornerstone in the overall process of governance of health research. REC members are a mixture of experts and lay members with an interest in health research ethics.

The Irish College General Practitioners (ICGP) is the professional body for general practice in Ireland. The College's primary aim is to serve the patient and the general practitioner by encouraging and maintaining the highest standards of general medical practice. As the representative organisation on education, training and standards in general practice, it also supports research. The ICGP Research Ethics Committee was granted formal recognition in 2005 and is currently chaired by Dr Akke Vellinga, NUIG. It reviews many types of research, including occasionally clinical trials, although the review of clinical trials and medical devices will come under the relevant NREC committees in 2022.

The primary role of the ICGP REC is to protect the welfare and the rights of research participants in accordance with recognised ethical principles and standards, relevant EU Directives and national legislation. The ICGP REC also helps to protect institutional sponsors and researchers by ensuring research abides to high quality ethical standards. The ICGP REC primarily reviews research being undertaken by general practitioners (GPs) or in general practice.

The ICGP REC has adopted the following two basic statements as a guide:

- 'Any study proposed which cannot answer the question posed is unethical.'
- 'All research on human beings carries the possibility of harm. The level of risk, which is acceptable, depends upon the importance of the question being addressed.'

Expressions of Interest to join the ICGP REC are welcomed from those with and without prior research ethics committee experience. A separate call has been issued in respect of patient/public (PPI) representatives for our committee.

This is an exciting opportunity to enable health research while ensuring that the research is strengthened by the highest ethics standards. Appointed Members will receive training and administrative support to conduct committee work.

### **Why join the ICGP Research Ethics Committee?**

- As a member of the ICGP REC you will be providing oversight and guidance to research studies being conducted in general practice. This will give you insights into the latest developments in research and enhance your professional and personal development.
- Skills that members will gain include:
  - Understanding of research ethics
  - Knowledge in research including methodology and statistics
  - Understanding of relevant legislation
  - Specialised knowledge, for example the individual rights of data privacy or about adults lacking capacity to give consent
  - Opportunity to train for the role of REC Chair or Co-Chair.

### **Process/Requirements/Compensation**

Meetings will predominantly be held online – with a total of seven meetings per year (one being a dedicated trainee meeting): generally, in February, April, May, June, September, October, and December. Exact meeting dates are agreed by the committee in December each year for the subsequent year and noted on the ICGP website.

Meetings are held on a weekday at 2pm and usually last 2-3 hours (depending on size of agenda/complexity of projects).

There are usually in the region of 10 applications reviewed per meeting (except Oct meeting which is usually larger due to trainee application numbers at this time of year)

Members will receive training and administrative support to conduct committee work. A template will be provided that will help to guide you during the review, especially in the beginning; however, the template is optional, and you are welcome to make your own list of notes.

Members will be given access to the shared ICGP REC folder on Microsoft OneDrive where all applications will be available for review two weeks prior to each meeting. You will be required to upload your reviews to this folder prior to the meeting.

At the meeting members will be asked to discuss their concerns and most importantly highlight any issues (ethical or non) which you may have with the study. Once approved by the chair, a letter relaying all concerns/queries (if sought) is issued to the applicant who has one month to reply to clarifications. These are then forwarded to all reviewers of the study once received back from the applicant.

For non ICGP employed staff, an honorarium is payable: €191 per face to face meeting attended and €100 for an online meeting attended. Travel expenses also apply for face-to-face meetings.

No specific membership timeframe is required, although a commitment for a minimum of one year is recommended.

### **Expression of Interest**

If you are interested, please send a letter (and CV if you wish) outlining your relevant experience and motivation to apply to be a member of the ICGP REC to [research@icgp.ie](mailto:research@icgp.ie) with the subject heading ICGP REC MEMBERSHIP. Although interest can be expressed at any time, the closing date for membership of the 2022 committee is noon on December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

**Dr. Claire Collins, ICGP Director of Research & Innovation.**