

Dear Editor,

This is to confirm that the article entitled “**Research Ethics Committees in Lebanon: Current Status and Challenges**” submitted to the *Indian Journal of Medical Ethics* is original and has been co-authored by the undersigned. All authors have participated in the work sufficiently to meet the ICMJE guidelines for authorship. All have read and approved the manuscript.

The submission is not under consideration for publication in any other journal.

We give consent to Dr. Mohammed M. Mehanna to act as the author for correspondence.

All details of sponsorship or relevant competing interests, financial or otherwise: no sponsorships or competing interest.

We have read the terms and conditions of authorship of IJME and accept them.

We feel the submission is suited to a medical ethics journal because:

Conduct of research ethics is a critical issue in the scientific community. In order to assure that the research specially the clinical trials, research ethics committees or institutional research boards were structured within most of the research-related organizations. The aim of the current study was to survey the ministry of health approved research ethics committees in Lebanon with the purpose to identify their current structure, processing and functionality. In addition, to address the limitations and constraints facing the committees. A survey-based study was conducted to identify committees' membership requirements, level of ethics knowledge, workload, and perceived challenges. Descriptive statistical analysis was performed to assess the obtained data.

In Lebanon, Ministry of Health accredited eighteen research ethics committees; most of them are related to the universities and hospitals. The percentile of respondent was 61.11% as eleven committees participated. The participating committees have standard operating procedures. The physicians were the most frequent member-background with the eleven committees while philosopher wasn't presented. Mainly the committees held their meetings on monthly base. Almost eighty percent of the committee's members had knowledge or formal training on conduct of research ethics. Moreover, physical resources such as meeting room and computers, practically, the committees use their organizations ones with a working budget. Regarding, the various challenges facing the committees to process their duties efficiently, the limitation of the national research ethics standards and lack of ethics experts, the lack of approved research proposal oversight, deficiency of research ethics experts and inadequate training on conduct of research ethics. The study results recommend to standardized the requirements of research ethic committees membership, allocate a private budget, develop a well-structures national research ethics guidelines, and empowering the committees with conduct of research ethics experts.

- The novelty in the work is being the first time to study the ethical committees' membership requirements, level of ethics knowledge, workload, and perceived challenges.

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