**Title: Ethics committees walking the high tension wire: can revised national ethical guideline support them to stay in balance?**

**Author: Priya Satalkar**

**Review Comments**

**Reviewer 1**

1. The study is focused on ICMR guidelines for Human research. There are some recommendations made at different points in the article. These could serve as feedback to ICMR prior to the next revision. Suitable topic for IJME, but not entirely new. The topic of accountability of ECs and unreasonable burden on them appears to have been addressed before in IJME.
2. The paper seeks to address an important issue regarding readiness and capacity of ethics committees to take on the duties placed on them. In India, not all ECs are registered or accredited. There is lack of oversight and audit of EC actions. EC members work is unpaid and done from a sense of social responsibility; can they be held accountable. However, the paper goes beyond the titled topic and critiques other areas of the ICMR guidelines and makes recommendation. It would be better if one paper was dedicated to highlight the impractical expectations and responsibilities placed on ECs….and another on a commentary of the new guidelines and its lacunae.
3. I think the article could be re-written focused on the EC and its expected role, rather than adding a comparison of other aspects of the ICMR guidelines. Some strong points are made regarding internet/big data research and commercialization of biobanked samples but these are out of sync with the topic (title). A separate commentary of the ICMR guidelines with omissions and recommendations would be preferable, going into depth at each point, and not just touching a few random segments of the guidelines. There are too many references with regard to internet based research. One or two important articles could suffice.
4. I think the article would be more readable if the large paragraphs are broken up. As of now, one idea runs into the next. I have highlighted some words that could be changed, made some comments in the body of the article on repetitions and inconsistencies.

All the review comments made are in the spirit of collaborative review, in quest of excellence and I hope it will be taken in the right spirit.

**Reviewer 2**

1. It would be immensely helpful to opt for shorter paragraphs woven around one single point to help enhance the point being made.

2. Seems there is scope for making the MS shorter. This is because at times it has gone into too much details, and at times on points which might not be as significant for such a commentary

3. Other comments inserted in text of the manuscript.