CHANGER

CHALLENGES AND INNOVATIVE CHANGES IN RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEWS

CHANGER : promoting human rights embedded ethics in the European Research Era

Marina Markellou & Jeanne Mifsud Bonnici
University of Groningen

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

Concept and overall objective

- **Trust** in science and responsible research is highly dependent on the ethical qualities of research
- This is why research projects are submitted to an **ethical review in Research Ethics Committees** (RECs)
- RECs are multidisciplinary, independent bodies, charged with reviewing research projects to ensure that they adhere to ethical standards and principles
- The continuous emergence of new technologies and new forms of research bring **new ethical concerns**
- This makes the functioning of RECs increasingly complex and emphasizes the **need to evolve** in order to cover this gap

Challenges

- What are the innovative changes that RECs need to be prepared for?
- What may need to change in REC processes?
- What tools are needed?
- How can the capacities of researchers to incorporate ethical judgements in the project design be strengthened?
- How to support ethics committees to address new challenges emerging from new technologies and new research practices?

Research involving AI (in) research

AI

- As a **tool in research** is transforming research
- Research in the **application of AI** in many sectors (healthcare, energy, transportation, creative industries etc.) is increasing rapidly
- Research in **AI models** such as neurosymbolic AI is also increasing
- However, these rapid changes have raised profound ethical concerns:
- embedded biases, contribute to climate degradation, threaten human rights…..

Question:

- Do RECs need to include these concerns in the research ethics review processes?

Research involving AI (in) research

UNESCO Recommendation on the Ethics of AI 2021: 10 Core Principles

1. Proportionality and do no harm,
2. Safety and Security,
3. Right to Privacy and Data Protection,
4. Adaptive Governance and Collaboration,
5. Responsibility and Accountability,
6. Transparency and Explainability,
7. Human Oversight,
8. Sustainability,
9. Awareness and Literacy,
10. Fairness and Non-Discrimination

European Commission Ethics Guidelines for Trustworthy AI - High-Level Expert Group on Artificial Intelligence 2019 : 7 Key Requirements:

(1) human agency and oversight,

(2) technical robustness and safety,

(3) privacy and data governance,

(4) transparency,

(5) diversity, non-discrimination and fairness,

(6) environmental and societal well-being and

(7) accountability

Research involving AI (in) research

Questions:

- How to translate the core values and principles into action?
- Are all the principles equally the responsibility of a REC?
- How to establish consistent and coherent AI guidelines across all EU member states to ensure ethical review consistency?

Research involving AI (in) research

Inventory of already existing guidelines/guidance documents (for research)

1. Different institutional documents are being developed

E.g. European Research Forum Guidelines on generative AI in research

2. Exploratory research ethics literature

Reflection: Lack of ‘applied’ guidance

GENERAL GUIDELINES | 20 March 2024

Living guidelines on the responsible use of generative AI in research

An ERA Forum stakeholders' document.

English
(566.81 KB - PDF)

Preview Download

Novel approaches

Five novel approaches:

1. Institutional capacity building, support and coaching

2. Inclusion of Ethics Advisors/Ethics Board in Project Management Structures

3. Iterated ethics reviews for multiple phases in a research design

4. Narrative-based ethical scenario assessment

5. Two-step consent / Multi-step consent

Novel approaches

Five novel approaches:

1. Institutional capacity building, support and coaching

2. Inclusion of Ethics Advisors/Ethics Board in Project Management Structures

3. Iterated ethics reviews for multiple phases in a research design

4. Narrative-based ethical scenario assessment

5. Two-step consent /multi-step consent

CHANGER

CHALLENGES AND INNOVATIVE CHANGES IN RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEWS

Thank you

Project partners

DEMOKRITOS NATIONAL CENTRE FOR SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

ΠΑΝΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΙΟ ΔΥΤΙΚΗΣ ΑΤΤΙΚΗΣ UNIVERSITY OF WEST ATTICA

SVEUČILIŠTE U SPLITU MEDICINSKI FAKULTET UNIVERSITY OF SPLIT SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

university of groningen

TU WIEN TECHNISCHE UNIVERSITÄT WIEN

NORSUS Norwegian Institute for Sustainability Research

UNIVERSITY OF BUCHAREST

UNIVERSITÄT BONN

K&I Knowledge and Innovation

KU LEUVEN

LMU LUDWIG-MAXIMILIANS-UNIVERSITÄT MÜNCHEN

UNIVERSITY OF MACEDONIA

KIT Karlsruhe Institute of Technology

Funded by the European Union