WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION
REGIONAL OFFICE FOR THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

Regional Director's Circular No. 1331

To: All EMR Staff 11 May 2021

EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Reference is made to RD's circulars No. 863 of 28 December 2008, No. 923 of 15 July 2010, No. 1105 of 30 October 2014, and No. of 1208 of 17 August 2017 regarding the Eastern Mediterranean Research Ethics Review Committee (ERC).

The composition of this Committee has been revised as follows, for a period of two years (until April 2023):

- Dr Gamal Serour (Egypt), Co-Chair
- Dr Mohamed Saleh Ben Ammar (Tunisia), Co-Chair
- Dr Niveen Abu-Rmeileh (Palestine)
- Dr Michel Daher (Lebanon)
- Dr Mohamed El-Sheikh (Sudan)
- Dr Aamir Jafarey (Pakistan)
- Dr Ehsan-Shamsi Gooshki (Islamic Republic of Iran)
- UNESCO Focal Point
- Dr Samar El Feky, DHP
- Dr Raynal Squires, DCD
- Dr Ayoub Al-Jawaldeh, NMH
- Dr Wajid Gohar, UHS
- Dr Alaa' Abouzeid, WHE
- Dr Altaf Arshad, SID
- Dr Ahmed Mandil, SID, Secretary

The essential function of the Committee is to review the protocols of all health research projects involving human subjects and disease surveillance activities (in their first year of implementation) and submit to WHO for funding in the Region. The purpose of this review is to protect the dignity, integrity, human rights, safety, and well-being of all human participants in research. It entails review of the protocol to ensure scientific rigour and ethical conduct of research. The Committee has the authority to approve, to request modification as a condition of approval, or to reject proposed activities that are within the scope of its authority.

The Committee also has the authority to verify that ongoing studies comply with the Organization's policies and regulations for conduct of health research in the Region, and it may suspend or terminate approval for ongoing studies under its jurisdiction. During the primary ethical review of research protocols, the Committee members are expected to ensure the following:

- the protocol complies with the "CIOMS International Ethical Guidelines for Health-related Research Involving Humans", including equitable selection of subjects, appropriate safeguards to protect the rights and welfare of vulnerable subjects, and informed consent;
- the research topic is important and will add to scientific knowledge;
- the research topic is relevant to institutional and community interests;
- the research design is appropriate, able to test the research hypothesis, and the study instruments are acceptable;
- adequate procedures are in place to avoid harm to participants in the research;
- pharmacological data for any drug to be used in the research are available;
- clinical research facilities at the study site are appropriate and all researchers involved in interventional studies have appropriate qualifications, training and experience;
- the potential benefits to be gained from the research outweigh any expected risks;
- privacy of individuals and confidentiality of data is protected and maintained;
- the budget for the project does not include undue inducement for subject participation, apart from legitimate compensation for travel and lost earnings.

Dr Ahmed Salim Al-Mandhari
Regional Director

Cc: WHO/HQ
UNRWA/Amman