

Goals, Objectives, and Desired Outcomes of an Ethical Review System

The National Ethics Advisory Committee – Kāhui Matatika o te Motu (NEAC) has issued a statement of *Goals, Objectives, and Desired Outcomes of an Ethical Review System* (GODO) in accordance with its statutory function to ‘determine nationally consistent ethical standards across the health sector’ (New Zealand Public Health and Disability Act 2000, s.16).

The ethical review system includes ethical aspects of self-review, peer review, ethics committee review, and specialist review of health and disability research and related activity. It applies established ethical standards to research and related activity. GODO states established goals, objectives and desired outcomes that are to be applied to the ethical review system itself.

Overall Goals

- Facilitate research and innovative practice that contributes to knowledge and improved health outcomes
- Protect participants in health and disability research and innovative treatment
- Find a balance that minimises risks and maximises benefits arising from health and disability research
- Recognise and respect the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi by enabling Māori to contribute to the ethical review system for health and disability research

Objectives

Desired outcomes

Accountable

- Public accountability requirements are defined.
- Ethical reviews meet internationally recognised standards.
- Ethical reviews take into account relevant legislation.

Enabling

- Research participants/subjects are protected.
- Quality research is facilitated.
- Review processes are clear about jurisdiction and coverage.
- Awareness of ethical practice among all stakeholders is developed.
- Good communication with affected communities is demonstrated.

- Local input is achieved.
- Positive relationships with all stakeholders are developed.
- System review mechanisms are in place.

Informed

- Researchers consider ethical implications from the outset; eg, there is clarification of who will benefit from the research (participants, the public, etc.).
- The perspectives of affected communities are included.
- Review processes are proactive and attend to emergent issues, and are responsive to change over time.
- Review processes apply appropriate expertise.
- Scientific and ethical standards are considered alongside each other where appropriate.
- Decision-making is consistent.
- Review capacity and relevant expertise are maintained and developed.

Enabling of Māori participation

- A Māori ethical framework is developed and implemented.
- Consultation with Māori is collaborative, genuine, inclusive, and appropriate.
- Māori participation in the decision-making component of the system is facilitated.
- The potential for diversity of opinion across iwi and regions is recognised and respected.
- Māori research capability is facilitated.

Fair

- Review processes are independent.
- Stakeholders have access to due process.
- Outcomes of processes are equitable.
- Applicants to review processes have the right of reply.
- Conflicts of interest are acknowledged and addressed.

Efficient

- Time and resources are used productively.
- Reviews are timely.
- Sector guidance is updated regularly, with opportunity for all stakeholders to participate.