

## COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RESEARCH (CHR) ANNUAL REPORT

2017

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**Members:** Janine Jennings (Chair), Cinnamon Bloss, Emil Chiauzzi, Mary Cwik, John Gibbs, Barton Palmer, Simon Rosser, and Sangeeta Panicker (APA Staff Liaison).

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In keeping with its mission to facilitate the conduct of and training in scientifically and ethically responsible research involving humans, in 2017 the Committee on Human Research (CHR) focused its efforts on education, outreach, and regulatory issues.

### Education and Outreach Initiatives

Data Sharing: The Committee revisited discussions regarding the rapidly expanding practice of data sharing within the scientific community. Given the numerous ethical and pragmatic implications associated with the implementation of data sharing plans, CHR has planned a Data Sharing Workshop for 2017 to help educate investigators within psychological and behavioral sciences. The workshop, directed by CHR member Cinnamon Bloss (UCSD), was designed to focus on the practical components of sharing research data, and geared towards established researchers, early career psychological scientists, as well as graduate students. Due to low registration, the workshop was cancelled and CHR hoped to reschedule it at a later date.

### Policy & Regulations

Notice of Proposed Rulemaking: On January 19, 2017 the final revised Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects (45 CFR 46, Subpart A), also known as the Common Rule, was published in the Federal Register by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). CHR reviewed the revised rule to determine how it might affect the regulation of behavioral, cognitive, and psychological research. Concluding that the final rule included many changes that were misdirected and would likely neither reduce regulatory burden nor enhance the protection of human research participants, the Committee identified potential mechanisms for providing constructive input to regulators and institutional review boards (IRBs) on the judicious application of the new regulations to behavioral, cognitive, and psychological research. However, CHR also noted that because of the hold on all new regulations imposed by the new administration, there was much uncertainty about if and when the new regulations would go into effect. Thus, CHR decided to continue monitoring the regulatory progress and to table further discussions about potential CHR initiatives focused on the new regulations, until the fate of the revised regulations is determined.

Resolution Supporting Mature Minors' Ability to Participate in Research: The impetus for this resolution was a commentary that was published in 2016 that highlighted institutional review board (IRB) barriers to research with gay/bisexual teens. conduct research with minors, when the focus of the study is HIV/AIDS as well as other sexual or risky health behaviors. IRBs will often impede the ability to conduct such research with minors, by interpreting and applying current

regulations in an overly conservative and rigid manner and requiring parental permission for minors' participation in research. However, obtaining parental permission for participation in research on sensitive or stigmatized issues may put the minor at risk of harm. Furthermore, some states allow mature minors to seek health care without parental permission. Thus, CHR drafted an APA resolution that affirms the importance of research on sexual health (and other risky) behaviors with mature minors and the need for judicious regulation of such research in a manner that affirms the principle of autonomy and respects the inherent rights of parents as well as mature minors. CHR will solicit feedback on the draft resolution from other APA boards and committees at the spring 2018 consolidated meetings.

### **Future plans and development of new initiatives**

CHR generated a list of potential initiatives for the Committee and began to prioritize them. The short list includes:

- **Learning Health Care System:** The Committee discussed the research ethics implications of the impetus for organizing American health care as a Learning Health Care System. Member Barton Palmer gave a short presentation demonstrating how this concept is relevant to clinical psychology research, in which patient care becomes research. Members also discussed the relevance to comparative effectiveness studies for treatments. The Committee will track the issue as it evolves.
- **Advocating for Psychological Science:** Members discussed issues of concern within the scope of psychological research, such as funding and grant writing reimbursement, reproducibility and replication studies in the face of diminishing research budgets, and informed consent used as a form of risk management. The Committee decided to maintain awareness of these issues and be ready to respond with a clear message to legislators, regulators, and agency staff, as necessary.
- **Research Misconduct:** The Committee discussed the issue of misconduct in research, faulting the academic culture (publish or perish) and grant funding system as contributing to irresponsible and unethical conduct in research. In addition, the difficulty in obtaining expert reviewers for the peer review process, who can question misinterpretations of the data and provide the appropriate criticism, may contribute to research misconduct going undetected. Members suggested writing articles on ethical issues most commonly encountered by students and advisors in research settings.

### **Membership Changes**

Janine Jennings, Cinnamon Bloss, Mary Cwik, John Gibbs, and Barton Palmer, continued to serve on the Committee during 2017 and were joined by Emil Chiauzzi and Simon Rosser. Drs. Palmer and Gibbs rotated off the Committee at the end of 2017 and were replaced by Leah Light and Karen Saules in 2018. The Committee elected Emil Chiauzzi to serve as Chair in 2018.