

Strategies for Promoting Responsible Conduct in Nursing Research

Yusrita Zolkefli^{1*} & Nuzul Qur'aniati²

¹PAPRSB Institute of Health Sciences, Universiti Brunei Darussalam.

²Universitas Airlangga, Surabaya, Indonesia.

*E-mail: yusrita.zolkefli@ubd.edu.bn

Dear Editor,

Conducting research can be a challenging aspect of nursing education. We have observed some challenges that researchers face in conducting research, such as low response rate, the complexity of sampling, data access, data management, conflict of interest, and publication practices. In addition, the protection of human rights as subjects in research. Such challenges call for ethical, responsible conduct and honest research without bias. This paper aims to reflect on three educational strategies for promoting responsible conduct in nursing research: responsible supervision, teaching responsible conduct in research, and research ethics committee oversight.

The first strategy is teaching responsible conduct in research through adequate knowledge and awareness of the principles of research ethics and examples of research misconduct. Equally significant is the emphasis on integrating proper research ethics training programs or courses into students' academic curriculums (1). An example is an issue of gaining access to the participants. Our students often reported that they rely on gatekeepers to access study sites. However, they also expressed concern that the nurses would feel compelled to participate in the study and, as a result, that truly informed consent would not be obtained. Informed consent is integral to research because it upholds research ethics that emphasise respecting research subjects' autonomy and safeguarding their well-being (2). This challenged the students and supervisors on the need to explain the principles of research ethics to the gatekeepers. This suggests that

building a culture of responsible conduct in research demands individual and institutional commitment and strategies conducive to academic integrity development. In other words, institutions such as universities and hospitals have a shared responsibility to engage staff members (such as administrators, nurses, doctors, and patients) to participate in research with a robust commitment to ethical principles. As a result, no one should feel compelled to participate in the research.

The second strategy is responsible supervision. We believe that the central role of the research supervisor is to promote responsible research and to practice a high standard of research conduct. Engagement is crucial in guiding the student to do the appropriate actions, especially when undertaking or completing research under pressure. This can be accomplished through feedback and reflective discussions with former supervisees who can share their research expertise and help novice researchers understand their research strengths and limitations. It is maintained that supervisors, as a rule, should be well acquainted with all aspects of a project, including quality control of data collection, data processing, and data analyses, in addition to contributing to the publication process itself (3). Supervisors must adopt a consistent strategy to encourage responsible behaviour from the outset.

The final strategy is research ethics committee oversight. The role of the ethics committee is critical in creating awareness of any potential researcher's biases and prejudices. It also creates a sense of being ethically responsible in the research environment and community. It is further argued that research ethics

committees must consistently protect participants' rights, safety, and well-being, thereby advancing the participants', science, and society's best interests (4). To achieve this, students must attend a research ethics workshop, which helps clarify the application process of seeking ethics approval before applying. This means that the committee helps to review that the researcher complies with the principles of research ethics, such as justice and beneficence for protecting human participants.

We believe that our current strategies may not be comprehensive enough but deemed to sensitise the students to potential ethical conflict areas. We feel that teaching responsible research conduct can be improved by making it more systematic, and more learning opportunities and resources can be further utilised. For example, there must be greater awareness of the many areas where unintentional ethical conflicts can arise. Furthermore, it is recommended that open ethical dialogue among research supervisors and students be provided to foster inspiring research environments and strengthen researchers' abilities to deal responsibly with the dilemmas and grey zones that may occur in research projects, despite regulations and written guidelines (5).

In summary, conducting research can be a challenging aspect of nursing education. It is essential to emphasise the importance of responsible conduct in research to the students. Reflecting on previous supervision of the research students, we argue that the student and the supervisor are accountable for their research conduct and for maintaining the research integrity throughout the research activity. While the ethics committee review of the research proposal helps improve the research activity, supervisors must continue to focus on the quality rather than the number of research projects. The researchers, too, must bring a critical eye to their research project from the outset. We admit that keeping the research relevant and impactful is not always effortless. Still, integrity is the spine of morally responsible research, which can be achieved through strategies such as responsible supervision, the teaching of responsible conduct in research, and research ethics committee oversight.

Article History:

Submitted: 26 September 2022

Accepted: 21 November 2022

Published: 30 November 2022

DOI: 10.31436/ijcs.v5i3.274

ISSN: 2600-898X

REFERENCES

1. Ababneh RA, Alzoubi KH, Ababneh MA. Evaluation of pharmacy students' knowledge and perception of scientific integrity. *Educ Sci (Basel)* [Internet]. 2020;10(2):41. Available from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3390/educsci10020041>.
2. Heath S, Charles V, Crow G, Wiles R. Informed consent, gatekeepers and go-betweens: negotiating consent in child- and youth-orientated institutions. *Br Educ Res J* [Internet]. 2007;33(3):403–17. Available from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01411920701243651>.
3. Wajman JR, Correia Marin S de M, Bertolucci PHF, Chaves MLF, Bromley T. Qualitative features in clinical trials: coordinates for prevention of passive and active misconduct. *Int J Clin Trials* [Internet]. 2018;5(1):5. Available from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.18203/2349-3259.ijct20180125>.
4. Trace S, Kolstoe SE. Measuring inconsistency in research ethics committee review. *BMC Med Ethics* [Internet]. 2017;18(1):65. Available from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1186/s12910-017-0224-7>.
5. Jensen LB, Kyvik KO, Leth-Larsen R, Eriksen MB. Research integrity among PhD students within clinical research at the University of Southern Denmark. *Dan Med J*. 2018;65(4).