

The IRB

Purpose, Function, and Proposals for Improvement

Sara Chandros Hull, PhD

Faculty, Department of Bioethics, CC

Director, Bioethics Core, NHGRI

Chair, NHGRI Institutional Review Board

Vice Chair, NIH General Medicine IRB Panel #1

Disclaimers/Disclosures

- No statement in this presentation should be construed as an official position of the National Human Genome Research Institute, National Institutes of Health, or Department of Health and Human Services.
- The speaker declares no financial conflicts of interest.

What is an Institutional Review Board (IRB)?

- “The IRB is an administrative body established to protect the rights and welfare of human research subjects...” (OPRR 1993)
- Also known as:
 - independent ethics committee (IEC)
 - ethical review board (ERB)
 - research ethics board (REB)

NHGRI Institutional Review Board

(circa 2007)



NIH General Medicine IRB Panel #1

(circa 2018)



Roadmap

- Brief history and background of IRBs and their function
 - Composition
 - Standards for review
- Proposals for improving IRB functions
 - Accreditation
 - Centralized IRB review



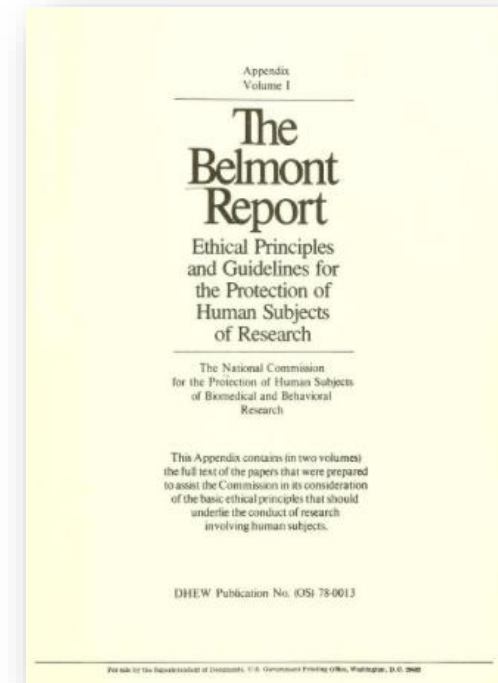
Why Were IRBs Created?

- Response to scandal and tragedy
 - US: PHS Tuskegee Study of Untreated Syphilis in the Negro Male
 - 1932-1972



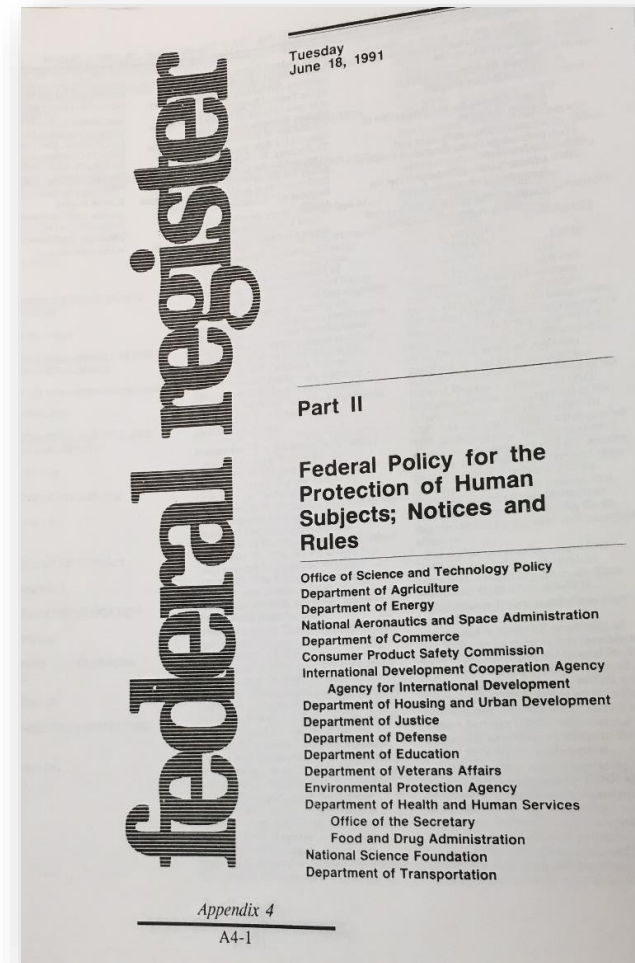
History of IRBs in the U.S.

- 1974 DHEW National Research Act
 - National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research
 - Belmont Report (1978)
- 1981 45 CFR 46
 - codified IRBs and informed consent



History of IRBs in the U.S.

- 1991 “Common Rule”
- Parallel FDA regs:
21 CFR 56
- 2017 Revised
Common Rule
 - Implementation
delayed until 2019



Ethical Requirements: Independent Review

- Review of research (design, population, risk/benefit) by unaffiliated individuals to:
 - Minimize impact of potential researcher COI
 - Assure public/social accountability

Emanuel *et al* (2000) *JAMA*

IRBs at a Glance

- >4000 IRBs in the United States
 - And 100s more in 113 countries

Bartlett (2008) *JEHRE*

- Approx. between 14-40 members
- Meet 1-2x/month → weekly!
- Staffed by full time administrators
 - Credentialing/professionalization
- Chair ~ 20% (at NIH: 15-100%)

IRB Membership

45 CFR 46.107/21 CFR 56.107

- At least 5 members with varying backgrounds
 - Qualified, diverse, not all men or all women or same profession
 - One scientist, one non-scientist
 - One unaffiliated member
 - No conflicts
 - Special areas of expertise

NIH Membership Requirements

- Non-affiliated members
 - Member representing participant perspective
 - Bioethicist
 - Statistician or epidemiologist
 - Pharmacist or pharmacologist
- At majority of IRB meetings

Non-Scientist

- “A member whose education, training, background, and occupation would incline him/her to view research activities from a standpoint other than any biomedical or behavioral scientific discipline” (SOP 2)
 - “...to fully appreciate risks associated with the study without being blinded by the lure of scientific advancement.” (Allison *et al* 2008)

Roles of Non-Scientists (n=25)

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>
• Layperson	68%	32%
• Public representative	28%	72%
• Community Representative	16%	84%
• Research subject advocate*	16%	84%

- *vs. non-NIH studies: majority of NS members describe themselves as representing or giving a voice to human subjects*

Allison, Abbott, Wichman (2008) *IRB*

Roles of Non-Scientists

non-scientists (n=25); scientists (n=84)

- Main role: review and make recommendations about informed consent document (72%; 47%)
- Represent community values, views and norms (60%; 81%)
- To make conduct of research accountable to public (88%; 93%)

Allison, Abbott, Wichman (2008) *IRB*

IRB Functions and Operations

- Reviews:
 - Initial protocols
 - Continuing review
 - Amendments
 - Unanticipated problems, non-compliance
 - Protocol deviations
 - Closures



NIH IRB Review Standards (Belmont-Based)

1. Proposed research design sound/will not unnecessarily expose subjects to risk
2. Risks reasonable in relation to benefits and knowledge to be gained
3. Risks to subjects minimized
 - Data monitoring plan
4. Equitable subject selection

NIH IRB Review Standards

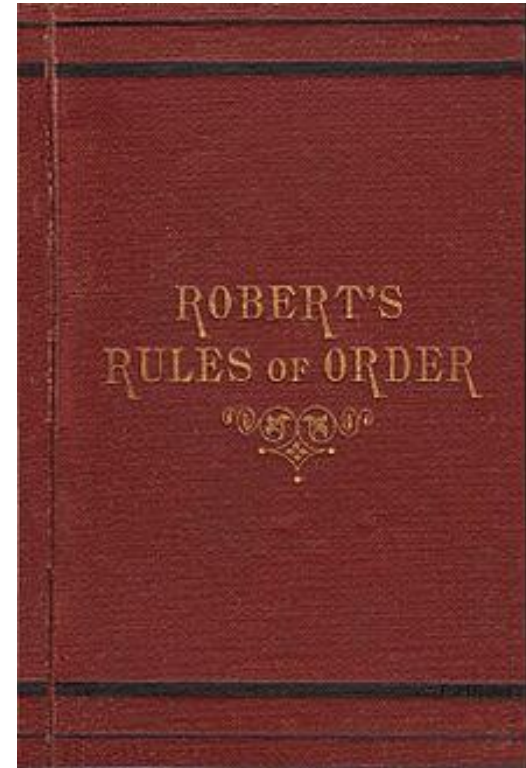
5. Additional safeguards for vulnerable participants
6. Informed consent
 - Obtained (or waived)
 - Documented
 - Assent
7. Privacy/confidentiality protections

Additional Considerations

- That investigators and research staff are qualified (e.g., training, experience)
- Use of ionizing radiation
- Collaborative research – need for other reviews
- FDA-regulated research
- Duration of approval
 - Annual or more often?

IRB Actions

- Simple majority (> half):
 - Unconditional approval
 - Approval w/stipulations
 - Deferred
 - Tabled
 - Disapproval
- Detailed minutes



Expedited Review

- When no more than minimal risk and involves certain categories of procedures (see OHRP guidance)
 - To be updated every 8 years

Summary of Key Common Rule Changes (per OHRP)

- **“Promoting individual autonomy”**
 - Changing requirements of informed consent
 - Adding broad consent option for secondary research
- **“Reducing administrative burden, streamlining IRB processes”**
 - Removing activities from the definition of research
 - Expanding exempt research
 - Updating and simplifying expedited review
 - Eliminating certain continuing reviews
 - Using single IRB review

Q: Does IRB Review Work?

A: We don't really know

- No controlled trials
- No underlying theory or framework of quality or effectiveness
- Lack of longitudinal assessment
- Little research with key stakeholders beyond boards/researchers

Nicholls *et al* (July 30, 2015) *PLOS ONE*
review of 198 empirical studies

Transformative Effects of IRBs

- “Unquestionably, their very existence has tempered the inevitable propensity of researchers to pursue investigations without dispassionately weighing the risks they are asking others to assume or fully informing their subjects of them.”

Edgar and Rothman (1995) *Milbank Q*

Transformative Effects of IRBs



Problems with the Current System

1. Structural problems

- Repetitive IRB reviews, inconsistencies in regulations, absence of resources

2. Procedural problems

- Time consuming, inadequate guidance, overly focused on consent forms

3. Performance assessment problems

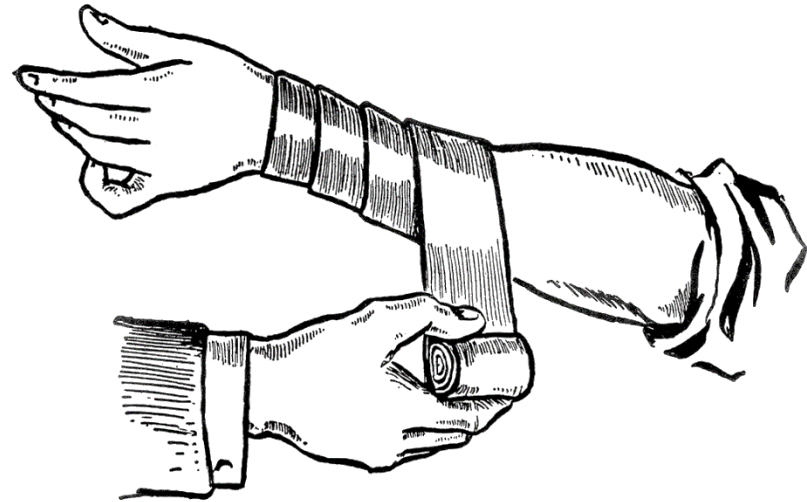
- Absence of data

Emanuel *et al.* (2004) *Ann Int Med*

Proposals to Fix IRBs

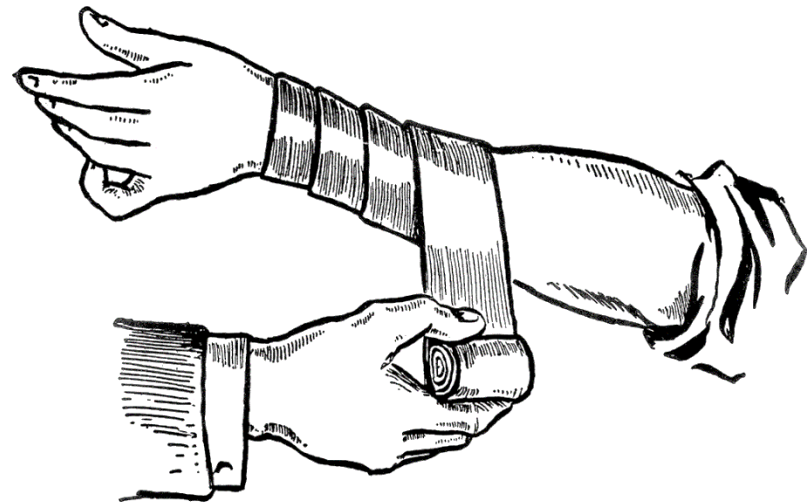
- Accreditation
- Centralized IRB review
- Legislative proposals
- Research and innovation

} convergence



Proposals to Fix IRBs

- Accreditation
- Centralized IRB review
- Legislative proposals
- Research and innovation



AAHRPP Accreditation (n=227)

- Goals:
 - Improve systems that protect the rights and welfare of research participants
 - Public communication
- Documentation and process focused
- NIH IRP Accreditation (March 18, 2014)
 - 3-year renewal (5 thereafter)
 - 42 SOPs
 - <http://ohsr.od.nih.gov/OHSR/pnppublic.php>

Problem: Repetitive IRB Review

- Multisite research is reviewed at each engaged institution, dissipating limited resources. Does it...
 - Foster local efforts to uphold ethical standards for research?
 - Capitalize on IRB's knowledge of local research environment and community standards?

Emanuel *et al.* (2004) *Ann Int Med*

Proposed Solution: Central IRBs

- Simple definition:
 - *A single IRB of record for a multicenter clinical trial.*
- Detailed definition:
 - *A properly constituted IRB to which sites cede all [sic] regulatory responsibility for scientific oversight and integrity of the protocol from initial review to termination of the research, including review of informed consent.*

Flynn et al. (2013) PLOS ONE

Examples

- NCI Central IRB
- Department of Veterans Affairs
- NeuroNEXT
- NHGRI/Undiagnosed Diseases Network
- PHERRB
 - http://ohsr.od.nih.gov/ohsr/public/PHERRB_SO_P28_v1_08-06-15_508.pdf

Central IRB Mechanism

Reliance agreements (SOP 20A)

- “An agreement between NIH and one or more institutions involved in the same cooperative research (see definition, below) that assigns regulatory responsibilities to a specific IRB.”
- Negotiated and executed by OHSRP (at NIH)

Final Common Rule - sIRB

“Creates a requirement for US-based institutions engaged in cooperative research to use a single IRB for that portion of the research that takes place within the United States, with certain exceptions. This requirement becomes effective 3 years after publication of the final rule.”

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2017/01/19/2017-01058/federal-policy-for-the-protection-of-human-subjects>

Final NIH Policy on the Use of a Single Institutional Review Board for Multi-Site Research

Notice Number: NOT-OD-16-094

Key Dates

Release Date: June 21, 2016

Effective Date: New Date - January 25, 2018 as per issuance of [NOT-OD-17-076](#)

NIH Policy - sIRB

...to establish the expectation that a single IRB (sIRB) of record will be used in the ethical review of non-exempt human subjects research protocols funded by the NIH that are carried out at more than one site in the United States.

Effective date: January 25, 2018

NIH Policy - sIRB

Rationale:

- No evidence that multiple IRB reviews enhance protections for human subjects
- Use of single IRBs may lead to enhanced protections for research participants by:
 - eliminating the problem of distributed accountability
 - minimizing institutional conflicts of interest
 - refocusing IRB time and resources toward review of other studies

Lack of Enthusiasm for CIRBs

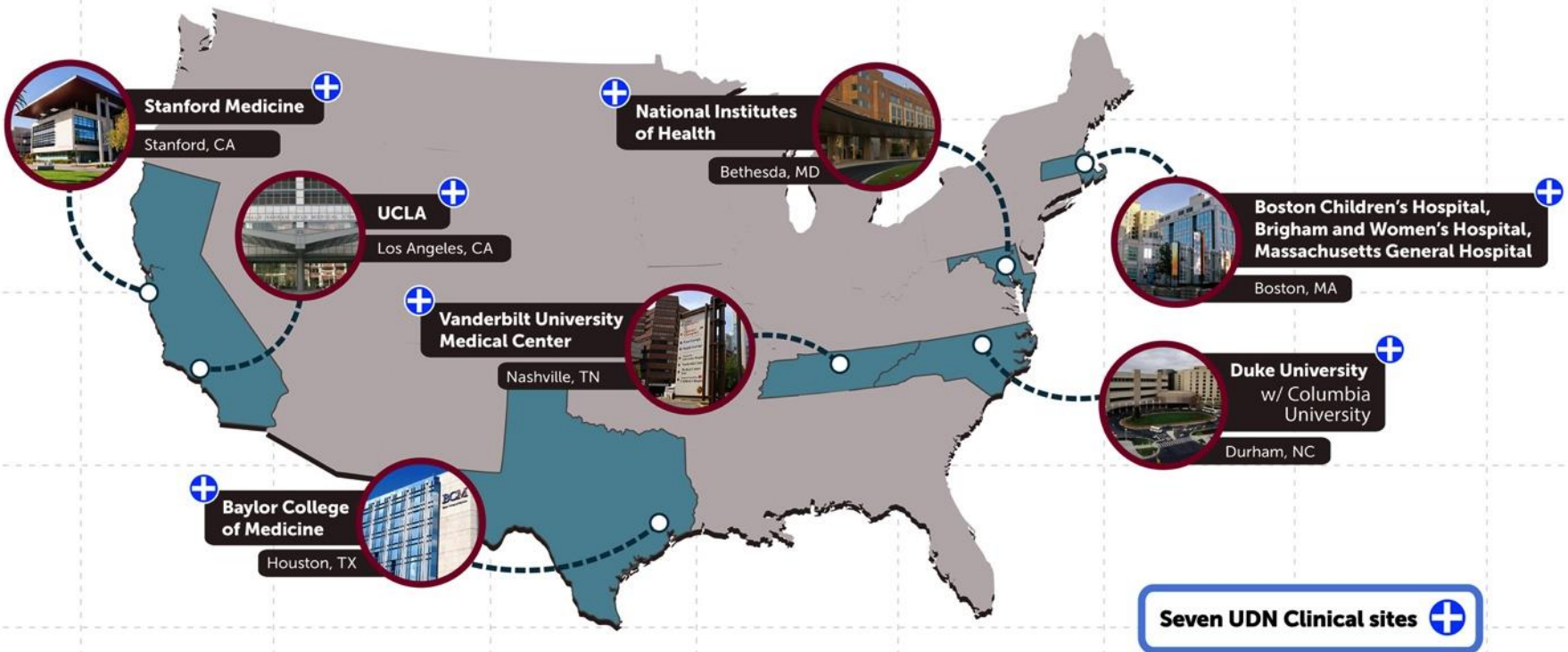
- Stakeholder concerns:
 - Institutional liability
 - Loss of community representation
 - Loss of knowledge of local subjects and investigators
 - Quality of CIRB review
 - Loss of revenue from IRB fees
 - Feasibility of working with multiple outside IRBs

Loh and Meyer (2004) *Acad Med*
Klitzman (2011) *BMC Med Ethics*
Flynn et al. (2013) *PLOS ONE*

IRB vs. Relying Institution

- IRB
 - Training of IRB personnel
 - Ensure ethical standards and regs
 - Approval of consent forms
 - Provide copies of IRB decisions, rosters, minutes
- Relying Institution
 - Maintain FWA Credentialing training of staff
 - COI review Investigator compliance
 - UP and AE reporting HIPAA/Privacy Review

SOP 20A, Flynn *et al.* (2013) *PLOS ONE*



The NIH site will continue to enroll about 150 patients per year, each of the clinical sites will ultimately enroll about 50 patients per year.

<http://www.genome.gov/27550959>

UDN Protocol

- 18 Reliance Agreements
 - Coordinating Center
 - Clinical enrollment sites
 - Cores
 - Sequencing
 - Model organisms
 - Metabolomics
 - Biorepository
 - Monitor



Relationship Status:

Interested in:

Looking for:

- Single
- In a Relationship
- Engaged
- Married
- It's Complicated**
- In an Open Relationship
- Widowed

UDN Consent Forms (n=150!)

- Main study (144)
 - 16 consent/assent forms (English + Spanish) x 9
 - Plus use of NIH or local short forms
- Patient web pages sub-study (2)
- Site specific (2 x 2)



NIH Policy on Use of a Single IRB for Multi-Site Research

Exceptions:

- Where review by the proposed sIRB would be prohibited by a federal, tribal, or state law, regulation, or policy*
- If there is a compelling justification*

Exceptions (public comment)

- IHS: “Multi-site studies with central IRB approval should be required to seek IHS or Tribal IRB approval, as appropriate, for research conducted within the jurisdiction of federally recognized AI/AN Tribes”

Exceptions (public comment)

- Tribal IRBs ensure that research
 - is conducted in a community engaged manner
 - does not deplete or divert limited tribal resources away from direct patient care
 - findings are first shared with tribal leadership, tribal communities, and key stakeholders

Revised Common Rule: Acknowledging Tribal Sovereignty

“Thus, if the official governing body of a tribe passes a tribal law that provides additional protections for human subjects, the Common Rule does not affect or alter the applicability of such tribal law ...”

Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects/Final Rule 2017, 7158, Executive Summary II.E.2

PRIMR Webinar

Preserving a Role for Tribal Review of Research in the Context of Single IRB Policies

Tuesday, September 20 • 1:00-2:30 PM ET



<http://www.primr.org/webinars/sept2016/>

Beyond Belmont: Ensuring Respect for AI/AN Communities Through Tribal IRBs, Laws, and Policies

Sara Chandros Hull, National Institutes of Health
David R. Wilson (Diné), National Institutes of Health

We concur with Friesen and colleagues (2017) that it is timely to reflect on the history of the Belmont Report and its role in the development of research regulations, especially its failure to account for harms to communities and transparency in research. We would like to amplify the authors' comments about the relevance of these failures as they pertain to American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) communities—and clarify a few important nuances. Transparency and trust are key issues that continue to beleaguer AI/AN communities and their perception of scientific research (Havasupai Tribe of the Havasupai Reservation v. Arizona Board of Regents and Therese Ann Markow 2008; American Journal of Medical Genetics [AJMG] 2010). It would have been fitting for the Belmont Report to address “respect for communities” in response to the harm caused to the African American community by the Public Health Service Tuskegee Syphilis Study,

especially given that the study was an important catalyst in the establishment of both the National Research Act and the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research in 1974. Realistically, however, it seems unlikely that the Belmont Report, a historical document that has stood intact for nearly 40 years, will be revised to formally incorporate a new principle that focuses on community respect and trust—which makes it all the more important to understand how the interests of AI/AN communities can be protected under the newly updated U.S. federal regulatory framework (“the final Common Rule”).

Friesen and colleagues (2017) acknowledge that the issue of community harms is relevant to AI/AN tribes through their inclusion of case examples and alluding to the sovereign authority that tribes have to establish research regulations. However, their concern that it is

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Address correspondence to Sara Chandros Hull, PhD, 10 Center Drive, Suite 1C118, National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, MD 20892-1156, USA. E-mail: shull@mail.nih.gov

Thank you!