

Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) – Collaborative Research

In recent years, there has been an increasing trend towards collaboration with other colleagues who have the expertise and /or resources required for the conduct of a particular research project. Collaborative research has become multidisciplinary and inevitable.

So, how does one ensure effective collaborations such as communications with the clear understanding of roles, responsibilities and relationships among collaborators?

Case Study

Dr Pink and Dr Blue met at an annual scientific conference. At the final day of the conference, they found out that they shared a common interest; research which studies the long term effects of diabetes. The duo begin to see that impending research collaboration is inevitable and begin almost immediately on drafting the protocol.

After working on the research protocol for months, Dr Pink suggested that he ought to be the main investigator and the research protocol should be submitted to his institution's ethics board. However, Dr Blue felt that she ought to be the main investigator instead. They soon realise that they were facing operational issues and disagreements over their roles and responsibilities for their collaborative research.

Question 1: What should both doctors do to ensure effective collaboration and communication? (Select the best answer.)

- a) They should discuss, clarify and agree on their understanding of roles and responsibilities, including the goals of the project and anticipated outcomes, the role each individual in the collaboration will play and how data will be collected, stored and shared.
- b) They should have some common understanding of how changes in the research design will be made, who will be responsible for drafting publications and the criteria that will be used to identify and rank contributing authors, who will be responsible for submitting reports and meeting other requirements and who will be responsible for or have the authority to speak publicly for the collaboration.

- c) They should have common understanding of how intellectual property rights and ownership issues will be resolved (if any) and how the collaboration can be changed and when it comes to an end. They should also share findings with colleagues in the collaboration and pay attention to what others are doing, report and discuss problems as well as findings. In addition, they should make other collaborators aware of any important changes and share related news and developments so that everyone in the collaboration is equally knowledgeable about important information.
- d) All of the above.

Question 2: Apart from effective collaboration and communication, what other effective management plans should they include? (Select the best answer.)

- a) There isn't any need for other management plans, as these will fall into place along the span of research.
- b) Their collaborative efforts should encompass effective management plans such as financial issues, training and supervision, formal agreements and compliance.
- c) Their collaborative efforts should encompass effective management plans for financial issues only.
- d) Their collaborative efforts should encompass effective management plans for training and supervision and formal agreements and compliance only.

References

- *Shamoo, A.E. and Resnik, D.B (2009). Responsible Conduct of Research 2nd Edition. Oxford University Press.*
- *Nicholas H. Steneck, Revised Edition 2007. ORI Introduction to the Responsible Conduct of Research Chapter 8: Collaborative Research*

To find out more about the RCR components, please visit:

<https://www.research.nhg.com.sg/wps/wcm/connect/romp/nhgromp/hsp/responsibleconductofresearch/corecomponentsofrcr>



THE RQA SELF-ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST IS UNDERGOING A REVAMP!
DO LOOK OUT FOR UPDATES ON THE NHG RESEARCH WEBSITE.

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Correct Answers for Case Studies

1. d, 2. b