

Focus Group Discussion Guide for the Effect of Public Health Emergencies on the Research Regulatory Systems: A Qualitative Study of COVID-19 in Uganda-(REC Administrators)

Introduction

The Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST) in collaboration with the National Drug Authority, the Uganda National Health Research Organization, Jimmy University, and the University of Oslo is implementing a project entitled: “Strengthening Clinical Trial Regulatory and Ethical Review Oversight in East Africa (ACCESS2 AFRICA)”, funded by the European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP).

One of the objectives of ACCESS2 AFRICA is to strengthen linkages between regulatory authorities and ethics review committees. In this regard, the UNCST would like to conduct a study that seeks to explore the effect of public health emergencies on the research regulatory system in Uganda, over the last three (03) years so that it can strengthen the research regulatory system preparedness and governance.

1. As a REC administrator, what REC Operations were implemented during the pandemic?
2. What are some of the challenges experienced during implementation of the operations?
3. How did the policies uffect the REC operations during COVID -19? s during ?
4. How did the UNCST support the REC to use the National Research Registration Information Management System (NRIMS)?
5. Share your experience on the use of the NRIMS system during the pandemic.
6. What do you think should be done by the National Regulatory Authorities to improve the research online application?
7. What opportunities for the REC do you think the COVID-19 pandemic brought on board?
8. As a REC administrator, how did you cope with REC operations during the pandemic? What coping strategies are implemented by the REC?
9. What would you like to see change in the REC operations after the COVID-19 pandemic?
10. Are there any other important issues that you would like to share that would help to enhance the regular REC operations during public health emergencies?

We have now come to the end of the interview.

Thank you very much for taking the time to respond to these questions and for your participation in this exercise.