Accreditation Spotlight

Yes, the IRB "does" use a lot of initialisms and acronyms – just like Harvard! One initialism that is an important part of accreditation is the HRPP. The HRPP stands for the Human Research Protection Program.

The HRPP Plan provides an overview of the Human Research Protection Program at Harvard University. The document defines roles, our mission, and includes a complete outline of the regulatory requirements that must be adhered to. It is the “30,000 foot view” document that ties all of the pieces of our program together. The HRPP may be viewed on our website here.
In the News

Are you conducting research on Amazon’s Mechanical Turk?

You may want to check out Wired Magazine’s recent article, “A BOT PANIC HITS AMAZON'S MECHANICAL TURK”.

What's New in the IRB?

You may have noticed that our IRB Protocol Template received a complete overhaul earlier this year. While we’ve been using the form, we’ve noticed areas where additional tweaks were needed.

We’ve re-ordered the various topics and revised the numbering for ease of navigation. We have also included text boxes to maintain formatting and clarified questions to get at the information that we are looking for; less back and forth is a good thing! Interested in taking a look? You can find the latest version of the IRB Protocol Template in the ESTR library.
Volunteers Needed for the "Exempt Wizard"

Would you be willing to spend a few minutes helping us with a pilot project that is designed to reduce the amount of time researchers will spend on completing IRB submissions in the future?

Harvard University has chosen to participate in a test of an electronic “wizard” that would allow investigators to self-determine if their project requires review by an IRB or if it meets the federal definitions of “exempt.” When you submit an IRB submission through ESTR, our online system, the IRB reviewer will place a comment in the study space with Exempt Wizard instructions.

Please know that your participation in the “wizard” will have no effect on the determination that your ESTR submission receives from the Harvard IRB office. As this is a demonstration project, the determination from the Harvard IRB is your official determination.

We realize that this is extra work for you and we appreciate your efforts. If this project succeeds, it will allow large reductions in the amount of work for investigators and IRB staff on reviewing exempt projects.

Do you speak IRB?

"Mandated Reporter"

Research proposals involving children ordinarily must include a plan for reporting suspected abuse of children to DSS. Additionally, consent and assent forms for children and parents ordinarily must include a statement that suspected child abuse or neglect may be reported to DSS.
Certain people, as a function of their professions or provisions, are deemed to be mandated reporters. Under Massachusetts law, (MGL Chapter 119, § 51A), mandated reporters include any:

Physician, medical intern, hospital personnel engaged in the examination, care or treatment of persons, medical examiner, psychologist, emergency medical technician, dentist, nurse, chiropractor, podiatrist, optometrist, osteopath, public or private school teacher, educational administrator, guidance or family counselor, day care worker or any person paid to care for or work with a child in any public or private facility, or home or program funded by the commonwealth or licensed pursuant to the provisions of chapter twenty-eight A, which provides day care or residential services to children or which provides the services of child care resource and referral agencies, voucher management agencies, family day care systems and child care food programs, probation officer, clerk/magistrate of the district courts, parole officer, social worker, foster parent, firefighter or policeman, licensor of the office of child care services or any successor agency, school attendance officer, allied mental health and human services professional as licensed pursuant to the provisions of section one hundred and sixty-five of chapter one hundred and twelve, drug and alcoholism counselor, psychiatrist, and clinical social worker, priest, rabbi, clergy member, ordained or licensed minister, leader of any church or religious body, accredited Christian Science practitioner, person performing official duties on behalf of a church or religious body that are recognized as the duties of a priest, rabbi, clergy, ordained or licensed minister, leader of any church or religious body, or accredited Christian Science practitioner, or person employed by a church or religious body to supervise, educate, coach, train or counsel a child on a regular basis."

Wow – that’s a lot of people!

Reports must be made where the mandated reporter, in his or her professional capacity, has reasonable cause to believe that a child under the age of 18 is suffering physical or emotional injury resulting from abuse inflicted upon him or her which causes harm or substantial risk of harm to the child’s health or welfare,
including sexual abuse, or from neglect, including malnutrition, or who is determined to be physically dependent upon an addictive drug at birth. A mandated reporter must immediately make a verbal report to DSS and must make a written report within 48 hours.

If you qualify as a mandated reporter for research that you are conducting, it is important to include this information in the IRB Protocol Template as well as a statement in the informed consent form that you are using for your study. Not sure? We can help! Just contact the IRB office for help.

Know someone who would be interested in subscribing to our newsletter?
It’s easy! Just share this link with them:
http://calists.harvard.edu/mailman/listinfo/huairb

Harvard University Area IRB, Committee on the Use of Human Subjects (CUHS)
Smith Campus Center, 1350 Massachusetts Ave, Suite 935 Cambridge, MA 02138
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