Research integrity and ethics experiences

Presentation by Natalie Evans

World Conference on Research Integrity, Hong Kong June 2-5
the embassy of good science
Stakeholder consultation

Objectives

• Explore stakeholders’ experiences and perspectives regarding research integrity and ethics

• Explore additional categories of information that may need to be collected

• Provide guidance to data collectors and the website developer
Consultation approach
Focus groups – Croatia, Spain, The Netherlands

Oct 2017 to March 2018

**Round 1**
- **Focus**: Participants’ perspectives and experiences
- **Approach**: Broad exploration of experiences
- **Expected outcome**: Understanding of participants’ experience explicit and implicit rules informing RE+RI practices

**Round 2**
- **Focus**: Fit of identified needs and discussion of platform
- **Approach**: Presentation and discussion of the platform
- **Expected outcome**: Understanding of participants’ informational needs and platform preferences

**Round 3**
- **Focus**: Similarities and differences between countries
- **Approach**: Presentation and discussion of findings from the three countries
- **Outcome**: Understanding of diversity and how to reflect it on the platform

**Online community discussion**
- **Focus**: Global experiences and preferences for the platform
- **Approach**: Moderated online community discussion
- **Outcome**: Understanding of global diversity and how to reflect it on the platform
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<tr>
<th>Location</th>
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Face-to-face consultation (n=59)
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<th>Role</th>
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<td>Researchers</td>
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<td>26 (68.4)</td>
<td>18 (81.8)</td>
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<td>9 (23.7)</td>
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<td>Editors</td>
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<td>Funders</td>
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<td>2 (9.1)</td>
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Face-to-face consultation – stakeholder groups (n=59)
Analysis

Thematic approach

• Deductive and inductive approach
• Line-by-line coding of transcripts
• New codes informing the focus group topic guide for subsequent discussions
• Codes were organized into themes and sub themes
Cross-cutting themes
Five cross-cutting themes

- Laws, policies, and guidance
- Individual dispositions, values, perceptions, and experiences
- Support
- Context
- Funding and publishing
Laws, policies, and guidance

- All countries subject to EU regulations and have national research integrity and ethics laws, bodies, and codes
  
  - *NL* code of conduct frequently discussed by a diversity of stakeholders,
  
  - *HR* code referred to as being adequately formulated but inadequately adhered to

**Because you know, we have a code of conduct which was established in 2006, basically... so in Croatia it isn't a problem to have everything set up on the place, it's a problem with how this is working in reality. So that is the problem. When you have corruption, when you have politics which is going inside research integrity, inside the science system, and know that this is a problem in Croatia.**

  Participant 34, Researcher and RE or RI Committee Member, Croatia – face-to-face focus group

- *ES* code not mentioned by any stakeholder.
Laws, policies, and guidance

• Institutional codes and policies develop from external normative developments and internal challenges

• Commitment and action required to translate high level documents into practice

You need the directors of the centres, or the manager or whatever, to actually be interested in this and say and I'm going to, every year when I do the annual talk to my whole centre, I'm going to touch on the issue of research integrity, and gender, just to show that it is important.

Participant 18, Research Manager, Spain

So there is, when there is no relationship between words and deeds, like you say action plans and everything, this is even worse than having nothing because you can show the people were doing wrong things, you can show 'look, we have very nice documents'.

Participant 28, Researcher and RE or RI Committee Member, Croatia
Context

• Dutch participants often referred to the ‘big cases’, particularly Diederik Stapel, and their immediate influence on institutional research integrity efforts.

• Croatian participants discussed challenges in adhering to laws and guidelines, due to conflicts of interest and political pressure, in the context of Croatia’s recent history of socialism and conflict.

[And then before the war we were – like the whole Eastern Europe I believe, not just Croatia – we were under socialism and there were other rules of morality, let's say, or of ethics, whatever, which were also correlated to the political system of that time. So that's always correlated, also in our time, but at the time it was at a higher level, let's say.

Participant 34, Researcher and RE or RI Committee Member, Croatia – face-to-face focus group]
Support

• Research integrity and ethics committee function influenced by members’ disciplines, expertise and, sometimes, conflicts of interest

• In the Netherlands, alternative support structures are developing for disciplines which do not legally require research ethics approval.

So, what we're now doing with the informatics, we call it, so the computer science ethical research board is more of a bottom-up approach. So, we really try to be a lightweight thing close to people that need us, instead of an over-arching institutional...

because we have, I thought we have so little support

Participant 13, Researcher and RE or RI Committee Member, the Netherlands - face-to-face focus group
Individual dispositions, perceptions, and experiences

- Perception of research integrity and ethics as a burden hinders real engagement

[i]f we’re talking about ethics, I mean, in the last few years I’ve seen the ethics field explode with ethics issues that you as a researcher, you have to encounter in doing research, you have to think about dual-use, you have to think about Nagoya, oh, if you’re thinking about getting material abroad you need export, import. You have to have the ethical clearance, you have to have GDPR, research data management. Seriously, these people are going nuts with all ...

Participant 10, RE or RI Committee Member and Policy Maker, Belgium – face-to-face focus group
Conclusions
Conclusion

Stakeholder consultation

- Differences across the three countries in terms of awareness, influence and translation into practice of codes and guidance:
  - Social and political influences hindering adherence to national laws and codes in Croatia
  - The lack of awareness of the national code of conduct in Spain
  - The development of alternative support structures for RE+RI that are not adequately covered by current legislation in the Netherlands.
Thank you
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