Strengthening research integrity in Australia

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This talk:
Introduction to the new Australian Code
Overview of principles and responsibilities
Dissemination and implementation of the Code
Supporting guides
Overview of the Investigation Guide
The role of NHMRC: Strategic Direction

**Invest** in high quality health and medical research and build research capability, supporting the best research and researchers.

Support the **translation** of health and medical research into clinical practice, policy and health systems and the effective commercialisation of research discoveries.

Maintain a strong **integrity** framework for research and guideline development, underpinning rigorous research and relevant and accurate guidelines and promoting community trust.
Australia’s framework for the responsible conduct of research

- Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (this talk)
- National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research
- Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes
- Indigenous guidelines
- HREC certification
- Misconduct policies
- Best practice methodology
- Other policies (open access, COI, etc.)
The Code establishes a framework for responsible conduct in Australia

• In 2018 NHMRC, ARC and UA released a revised Code

The 2018 Code:

✓ Supports high-quality research
✓ Enhances credibility of research
✓ Promotes community trust in research
Opportunity for change

• Opportunity to consider whether the 2007 Code was achieving its purpose.

• Consideration of how prescriptive the Code should be.

• Institutions within Australia require differing levels of advice about implementing and applying the requirements of the Code.
A principles-based document to be supported by Guides

The new approach: the Code is a principles-based document with:

- 8 principles
- 13 responsibilities for institutions
- 16 responsibilities for researchers
- Applicable to all research disciplines at all research institutions.
- The Code will be supported by a number of Guides.
- The first one is the ‘Guide to Managing and Investigating Potential Breaches of the Code’.
Eight principles underpin research integrity

P1 Honesty in the development, undertaking and reporting of research
P2 Rigour in the development, undertaking and reporting of research
P3 Transparency in declaring interests and reporting research methodology, data and findings
P4 Fairness in the treatment of others
P5 Respect for research participants, the wider community, animals and the environment
P6 Recognition of the right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to be engaged in research that affects or is of particular significance to them
P7 Accountability for the development, undertaking and reporting of research
P8 Promotion of responsible research practices
# 13 responsibilities for institutions

| R1 | Establish and maintain good governance and management practices for responsible research conduct. |
| R2 | Identify and comply with relevant laws, regulations, guidelines and policies related to the conduct of research. |
| R3 | Develop and maintain the currency and ready availability of a suite of policies and procedures which ensure that institutional practices are consistent with the principles and responsibilities of the Code. |
| R4 | Provide ongoing training and education that promotes and supports responsible research conduct for all researchers and those in other relevant roles. |
| R5 | Ensure supervisors of research trainees have the appropriate skills, qualifications and resources. |
| R6 | Identify and train Research Integrity Advisors who assist in the promotion and fostering of responsible research conduct and provide advice to those with concerns about potential breaches of the Code. |
| R7 | Support the responsible dissemination of research findings. Where necessary, take action to correct the record in a timely manner. |
| R8 | Provide access to facilities for the safe and secure storage and management of research data, records and primary materials and, where possible and appropriate, allow access and reference. |
| R9 | Facilitate the prevention and detection of potential breaches of the Code. |
| R10 | Provide mechanisms to receive concerns or complaints about potential breaches of the Code. Investigate and resolve potential breaches of the Code. |
| R11 | Ensure that the process for managing and investigating concerns or complaints about potential breaches of the Code is timely, effective and in accord with procedural fairness. |
| R12 | Support the welfare of all parties involved in an investigation of a potential breach of the Code. |
| R13 | Base findings of investigations on the balance of probabilities and ensure any actions are commensurate with the seriousness of the breach. |
16 responsibilities for researchers

R14 Support a culture of responsible research conduct at their institution and in their field of practice.

R15 Provide guidance and mentorship on responsible research conduct to other researchers or research trainees under their supervision and, where appropriate, monitor their conduct.

R16 Undertake and promote education and training in responsible research conduct.

R17 Comply with the relevant laws, regulations, disciplinary standards, ethics guidelines and institutional policies related to responsible research conduct. Ensure that appropriate approvals are obtained prior to the commencement of research, and that conditions of any approvals are adhered to during the course of research.

R18 Ensure that the ethics principles of research merit and integrity, justice, beneficence and respect are applied to human research.

R19 Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and respect their legal rights and local laws, customs and protocols.

R20 Ensure that the 3Rs (Replacement, Reduction and Refinement) are considered at all stages of research involving animals and minimise the impacts on animals used in research and in so doing support the welfare and wellbeing of these animals.

R21 Adopt methods appropriate to the aims of the research and ensure that conclusions are justified by the results.

R22 Retain clear, accurate, secure and complete records of all research including research data and primary materials. Where possible and appropriate, allow access and reference to these by interested parties.

R23 Disseminate research findings responsibly, accurately and broadly. Where necessary, take action to correct the record in a timely manner.

R24 Disclose and manage actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest.

R25 Ensure that authors of research outputs are all those, and only those, who have made a significant intellectual or scholarly contribution to the research and its output, and that they agree to be listed as an author.

R26 Acknowledge those who have contributed to the research.

R27 Cite and acknowledge other relevant work appropriately and accurately.

R28 Participate in peer review in a way that is fair, rigorous and timely and maintains the confidentiality of the content.

R29 Report suspected breaches of the Code to the relevant institution and/or authority.
How is the Code disseminated?

- NHMRC and ARC websites
- Webinars
- Gave talks on invitation
- Targeted and public consultation
How is the Code disseminated?

Referred to in key NHMRC documents
How is the Code disseminated?

Referred to in key NHMRC documents
Supporting guides assist institutions to implement the Code

Released with Code:

Guide to Managing and Investigating Potential Breaches of the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research

Later….

Authorship: A guide supporting the Code
Management of Data and Information in Research: A guide supporting the Code

Coming soon….

Disclosure of interests and management of conflicts of interest: A guide supporting the Code
Collaborative research: A guide supporting the Code

Later….

Peer review: A guide supporting the Code
Publication and dissemination of research: A guide supporting the Code

Later….

Supervision: A guide supporting the Code
Research Integrity Advisors: A guide supporting the Code
Overview of the Investigation Guide

• Presents a model process
• Developed based on principles of procedural fairness
• New additions:
  – Spectrum of breaches
  – Advice about Research Integrity Advisors
  – Focus on communication with respondents/applicants
  – Advice on Panel composition
Australian Research Integrity Committee

Advisory Committee to the CEO’s of NHMRC and ARC

It reviews the process undertaken by an institution in undertaking an investigation under the Code

Strengthening the membership and operating procedures of ARIC in line with the new Code

Seeing an increasing number of ARIC reviews
Funding agency perspective

Need to promote consistency and transparency within the sector

Provide broad principles that can be understood and applied by everyone

Develop detailed guides so that everyone is clear about expectations

Strong communication with institutions, both in developing the Code and Guides and in implementation
Thank you

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