

Meeting Minutes

National Research Ethics Committee for COVID-19-related Research (NREC COVID-19)

Time: 3 – 5pm

Date: 10th June 2020

Location: virtual meeting

Attendance

Prof. Mary Horgan	Chair, NREC COVID-19
Prof. Anthony Staines	Vice Chair, NREC COVID-19
Prof. Hannah McGee	Vice Chair, NREC COVID-19
Prof. Pat Manning	Committee member, NREC COVID-19
Dr Donal O’Gorman	Committee member, NREC COVID-19
Prof. Mary Donnelly	Committee member, NREC COVID-19
Prof. Andrew Greene	Committee member, NREC COVID-19
Prof. Orla Sheils	Committee member, NREC COVID-19
Mr John Woods	Committee member, NREC COVID-19
Mr Gavin Lawler	Committee member, NREC COVID-19
Dr Akke Vellinga	Committee member, NREC COVID-19
Dr Jean Saunders	Committee member, NREC COVID-19
Prof. Tom Fahey	Committee member, NREC COVID-19
Prof. Shaun O’Keeffe	Committee member, NREC COVID-19
Ms Dympna Moran	Committee member, NREC COVID-19
Ms Grainne McGettrick	Committee member, NREC COVID-19
Ms Caoimhe Gleeson	Committee member, NREC COVID-19
Dr Jennifer Ralph James*	Head, Office for NRECs
Ms Aileen Sheehy	Programme Manager (PM), Office for NRECs

*Drafted minutes

Apologies: Prof. Suzanne Norris, Ms Sharon Foley

Quorum for Decisions: Yes

Agenda

- Welcome & Apologies
- Minutes approval 3rd June & Matters Arising
- Declarations of Interest

- Application 20-NREC-COV-030-2
 - Application 20-NREC-COV-061
 - Applicant response 20-NREC-COV-055
 - AOB
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- The Chair welcomed the committee.
- The minutes from meeting on 3rd June were approved.
- Matters arising from the 3rd June meeting as follows:
 - (1) The Head of Office for NRECs provided a running count of applications considered by NREC COVID-19 to date.
- The following declarations of interest were made, and the members recused themselves from the discussion of the applications in question:

Prof. Hannah McGee – 20-NREC-COV-030-2

Prof. Tom Fahey – 20-NREC-COV-030-2

Prof. Orla Sheils - 20-NREC-COV-030-2

Applications

Application Number	20-NREC-COV-030-2
Applicant	Prof. Rose Anne Kenny
Study Title	Altered lives in a time of crisis: Preparing for recovery from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the lives of older adults (TILDA)
Institution	TCD
NREC COVID-19 Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The committee noted that this application represents Wave 6 of data collection for a long-standing study in Ireland on older adults; the application was originally deferred at the committee meeting on 13th May. • The committee agreed that this COVID-19-related amendment to the study will yield valuable information.
NREC COVID-19 Decision	<i>Provisional approval</i>
Associated Conditions	1. The committee is of the view that some questions in the questionnaire may be distressing to some individuals, and that this risk should be captured in the PIL. Additionally, details of appropriate avenues of support should be provided in participant materials including the new Irish Hospice Foundation Bereavement Support Line.

	<p>Suggestions: the committee makes several suggestions for consideration by the applicant. The committee suggests that several questions, including 1.4 and 2.1, would benefit from a time context (eg lockdown, reopening phases). The committee further suggests that the examples given for exercises be amended to reflect those available during the pandemic, for example doubles tennis and aerobics classes were unlikely available. The committee recommends the questionnaire be carefully proof-read.</p>
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Application Number	20-NREC-COV-061
Applicant	Dr Paul Hynds
Study Title	COVID-19: (Space Time) Scanning, Mobility and Intervention Diagnosis (CO/SMID)
Institution	Environmental Sustainability and Health Institute
NREC COVID-19 Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The committee agreed that this is an important study with potential to inform public policy. • The committee agreed that the protocol is well-described and will be conducted by an experienced team, presenting no significant risks.
NREC COVID-19 Decision	<i>Provisional approval</i>
Associated Conditions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Noting the intention to geocode infection data, the committee requires further justification on the risk presented by small area statistics to anonymisation, and requests assurances that appropriate risk mitigation measures are in place. 2. The committee is of the firm view that results from this research study should be disseminated in peer-reviewed journals and beyond to maximise societal benefits, and it is therefore counter-productive to reference permission from the data-managers.

Application Number	20-NREC-COV-055 (Applicant Response)
Applicant	Dr Niamh Reidy
Study Title	Burden of COVID-19 Infection in a Roma Population in an Urban Irish Setting: A Retrospective Review
Institution	RCSI / Beaumont Hospital
NREC COVID-19 Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The committee noted the applicant's response to their conditions associated with their decision of Provisional Approval (28th May 2020); the committee was satisfied with the responses to three of the four conditions. • Regarding the fourth condition, the committee recognised that obtaining informed consent may present logistical challenges to

	<p>the research study, but this does not negate its requirement or appropriateness. They acknowledged efforts by the applicant to engage a Roma community representative, however their view is that this does not displace the obligation to seek informed consent; not doing so may ensue unintended consequences for individual participants and their community. The committee remain firm in their view that informed consent is required from the Roma community participants.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Head of Office agreed to inform the applicant that this condition remains for consideration of final approval of the study.
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- AOB: The committee agreed that the Chair will convene a subset of the committee, while still ensuring a quorum, depending on application number from week to week.
- The Chair closed the meeting

APPROVED