



RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

CONNECTING RECs IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

Newsletter

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REASA

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SECTION ONE: REASA Bootcamp: Review of Data Intense Protocols

The annual REASA Bootcamp was held on 26 October 2022 at the Raddison Blu Hotel, Waterfront, Cape Town. The REASA bootcamp formed part of the annual ARESA (Addressing Research Ethics training in Southern Africa) and REDSSA (Research for Ethical Data Science in sub-Saharan Africa) seminar series. Sixty-six delegates attended the bootcamp. Prof Keymantri Moodley welcomed the delegates to the seminar series and Mrs Tanya Coetzee gave a short overview of REASA. Prof Effy Vayena from the Institute of Translational Medicine in Zurich, Switzerland, provided an introduction to the workshop objectives and introduced the ethical assessment tool that has been developed for use in the review of data intense protocol. Dr Lulu Nair facilitated the group discussions.

Each group could then consider the ethics assessment tool to critically discuss

shortcomings in the review of data intense protocols that they receive at their respective research ethics committees.



Prof Keymantri Moodley, Prof Effy Vayena and Dr Lulu Nair (ltr)

During the discussion, it became apparent that there was a need to define exactly what is meant by the term “big data”. In order to do this, the following definition was shared, by Dr Agata Feretti:

“The term big data is still vaguely defined. In general terms, big data involves large sets of data with diverse levels of

analysable structuration, coming from heterogenous sources (online data, social media profiles, financial records, self-tracked parameters, etc.) produced with high frequency and which can be further processed and analysed using computational techniques. While the term big data has become nearly ubiquitous, there is controversy over what data volumes are sufficiently large to obtain the big data label. Dumbil, for example, suggested that data should be considered big when they cross the threshold of the conventional databases systems' capacity in processing information."

Each group was given an opportunity to share their findings, which was followed by lively discussions between the delegates, which concluded the morning's activities. The delegates found the ethics assessment tool, which was developed by Dr Feretti as part of her doctorate, to be meaningful, as it included all aspects to be assessed when undertaking a review of a data intense protocol. One of the delegates that attended the bootcamp stated that, *"I found the bootcamp one of the most valuable and interesting workshops that I have attended in a while"*. Is your REC ready to review big data projects?



Delegates attending the REASA REC Bootcamp

SECTION TWO: Biannual General Meeting (BGM) of REASA

The Executive Committee of REASA would like to inform its members that the Biannual General Meeting will be undertaken in 2023. During the BGM, the new Executive Committee will be announced and as such nominations for REASA members that would like to serve on the Executive Committee, will be requested from the middle of January 2023. We will keep members informed of further details as they become available. The current Executive Committee of REASA wants to wish all REASA members a wonderful holiday season and an incredible 2023.

SECTION THREE: Condolences on the passing of Kelsey February

We would like to take this opportunity to share our deepest condolences with the family, friends and colleagues of Ms Kelsey February from the Centre of Medical Ethics and Law (CMEL) at Stellenbosch University, following her passing due to a serious illness. Kelsey will be remembered by all the graduates of the Advancing Research Ethics training in Southern Africa (ARESA) program, for her excellent logistical management skills during our training and her kind heart, as well as her support to us afterwards as REASA members. We are all very saddened by this news and our hearts go out to Kelsey's family and her colleagues at CMEL.

Contact secretary.reasa@gmail.com for further details or phone (+27) 81 739 9429