

AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE— GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEERS

Thank you for taking part in Defence Research. Your involvement is much appreciated. This pamphlet explains your rights as a volunteer.

What is the Australian Defence Human Research Ethics Committee?

- ADHREC is the Australian Defence Human Research Ethics Committee. It was established in 1988, to make sure that Defence complied with accepted guidelines for research involving human beings.
- After World War II (WWII), there was concern around the world about human experimentation. The Declaration of Helsinki was made in 1964, which provided the basic principles to be followed wherever humans were used in research projects.
- The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) in Australia has published the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* (NHMRC 2007). This *Statement* describes how human research should be carried out.
- ADHREC follows both the *Declaration of Helsinki* and the *NHMRC Statement*.

What Australian Defence Human Research Ethics Committee approval means

- If you are told that the project has ADHREC approval, what that means is that ADHREC has reviewed the research proposal and has agreed that the research is ethical.
- ADHREC approval does not imply any obligation on commanders to order or encourage their Service personnel to participate, or to release personnel from their usual workplace to participate. Obviously, the use of any particular personnel must have clearance from their commanders but commanders should not use ADHREC approval to pressure personnel into volunteering.

Voluntary participation

- As you are a volunteer for this research project, you are under **no obligation** to participate or continue to participate. You may withdraw from the project **at any time** without detriment to your military career or to your medical care.
- At no time must you feel pressured to participate or to continue if you do not wish to do so.
- If you do not wish to continue, it would be useful to the researcher to know why, but you are under no obligation to give reasons for not wanting to continue.

Informed consent

- Before commencing the project you will have been given an information sheet which explains the project, your role in it and any risks to which you may be exposed.
- You must be sure that you understand the information given to you and that you ask the researchers about anything of which you are not sure.
- If you are satisfied that you understand the information sheet and agree to participate, you should initial every page of the information sheet and keep a copy.
- Before you participate in the project you should also have been given a consent form to sign. You must be happy that the consent form is easy to understand and spells out what you are agreeing to. Again, you should keep a copy of the signed consent form.

Clinical trials.

The NHMRC requires that the researcher provide a nominal roll of study participants where the study is a clinical trial (eg when the researchers are trialling a new treatment or device). For trials conducted by large Defence institutions like the Defence Science and Technology Organisation, the Submarine and Underwater Medicine Unit, the Army Malaria Institute, the Institute of Aviation Medicine or the Centre for Military and Veterans' Health, this roll is kept by them on ADHREC's behalf. These records will not be used to consider your medical employment standard or for compensation purposes.

All ADHREC protocol files are secured in a locked filing cabinet and only the Secretariat has access to these. ADHREC will not pass your contact information to a third party without your permission.

Complaints

- If at any time during your participation in the project you are worried about how the project is being run or how you are being treated, then you should speak to the researchers.
- If you don't feel comfortable doing this, you can contact the Executive Secretary of ADHREC. Contact details are:

Executive Secretary
Australian Defence Human Research Ethics Committee
Department of Defence
CP2-7-101
PO Box 7911
CANBERRA BC ACT 2600
Telephone: (02) 6266 3837
Facsimile: (02) 6266 3072
Email: ADHREC@defence.gov.au

More information

- If you would like to read more about ADHREC, visit the ADHREC website at:

<http://www.defence.gov.au/health/research/adhrec/i-adhrec.htm> (Internet).