

Ethics on the Move

There's a worldwide move afoot to register every clinical trial and track them from beginning to end. Medical journals are vowing to publish all research results, not just those that are positive. And some pharmaceutical companies are saying that their clinical trials will be accurately reported, even those with negative results. Most research is carried out as planned and approved, but we sometimes hear of a researcher who has cut a required corner or two and in the process has jeopardized research participants and/or the reliability of the research. Recently there have been red faces in the U.S. because a ranking expert in a particular specialty favourably commented on a research project at the same time that he had a financial interest in the results. We've even heard of patients and others who have tried to participate in a clinical trial to get the 'inside dope' on a potentially 'hot' medication the more profitably to trade in the stock market. All these situations have ethical implications, and some CAPA members have indicated their interest.

CAPA is also actively involved in Health Canada and Canadian Institute of Health (CIHR) initiatives in research ethics. Some examples: protection of privacy and confidentiality in the design, conduct and evaluation of health research; the appropriate use of placebos in clinical trials; the governance of research involving humans; and benefit sharing in human genetic research. If you are interested in any or all of these topics, contact Anne Dooley annemd@shaw.ca or Lisa Cirella lcirella@arthritis.ca. *Anne Dooley, CAPA Research Chair*