



Global Forum on
Bioethics in Research

Seminar 5: Mental health research involving adolescents – ethical issues

23 November 1pm-2.30pm (London/GMT)

This webinar will explore the crucial question of adolescent mental health, and the research needed to improve young people's access to appropriate services. An effective response to the high levels of mental ill-health among this age group in many LMICs is made harder by community stigma, low levels of service provision, and lack of research into culturally-appropriate interventions. Challenging ethical questions arise with respect to the role of adolescents themselves, both in influencing the research agenda to be responsive to their needs, and in their own choices about research participation. These issues need to be navigated in ways that are sensitive to cultural context, recognising both adolescents' developing capacity to make their own decisions, and cultural approaches to decision-making within families and communities that may favour the collective over the individual. Further important ethical questions arise in the context of the relevance of the research to local needs, and the likelihood of research findings feeding into service improvements.

Chair: [Katharine Wright](#), Nuffield Council on Bioethics, UK

Panel and presentations:

- [Pallab Maulik](#), George Institute for Global Health, India
– Adolescents' resilience and treatment needs for mental health in Indian slums (ARTEMIS)
- [Rakhshi Memon](#), University College London, UK
– Ethical issues in Randomised Clinical Trials for Adolescents who Self-Harm: the limits of equipoise and evidence
- [Pamela Garbus](#), Universidad Autónoma de Querétaro, Mexico
– Research ethics in an epidemiological study of adolescent mental health in Mexico

The following questions will form the basis of the panel discussion. Seminar attendees are invited to submit questions when they [register](#) or by [email](#), or during the live discussion.

1. **How can adolescents be meaningfully involved in research concerned with their mental health, in ways that are culturally appropriate?**
2. **What are the ethical challenges in developing a 'home-grown' evidence base, eg by adapting interventions found to be effective in different cultural contexts?**
3. **What role can digital technologies play in addressing the mental health needs of adolescents – and how can any associated ethical concerns be addressed?**
4. **What is needed to help ensure that positive research findings are translated effectively into service improvements for adolescents – including those who are most marginalised?**

Background reading

- Nuffield Council on Bioethics report '[Children and clinical research: ethical issues](#)' (May 2015)

- Maulik PK, Devarapalli S, Kallakuri S, Tripathi AP, Koschorke M, Thornicroft G. Longitudinal assessment of an anti-stigma campaign related to common mental disorders in rural India. *Br J Psychiatry*. 2019;214(2):90-95. doi:10.1192/bjp.2018.190
- Memon R, Asif M, Khoso AB, Tofique S, Kiran T, Chaudhry N, Husain N, Edwards SJ. Recognising values and engaging communities across cultures: towards developing a cultural protocol for researchers. *BMC Medical Ethics*. 2021 Dec;22(1):1-8.

This is the fifth of five seminars on the theme 'Ethical issues arising in research with people with mental health conditions'. Recordings of all the seminars in the series are available at: www.gfbr.global/gfbr-2021-seminar-series