

## RESEARCH INVOLVING PRISONERS

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Unit: Human Research Protections Program (HRPP), Office of Research

Applies to: Faculty and Staff involved in human research

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### **PURPOSE:**

To describe additional protections and procedures required in the protocol and any additional measures required to secure approval to conduct a project involving vulnerable subjects. Prisoners are considered to be vulnerable subjects in the context of participation in a project.

### **DEFINITIONS:**

**Prisoner:** A person who is involuntarily confined or detained in a penal institution. The term is intended to encompass individuals sentenced to such an institution under a criminal or civil statute, individuals detained in other facilities by virtue of statutes or commitment procedures which provide alternatives to criminal prosecution or incarceration in a penal institution, and individuals detained pending arraignment, trial, or sentencing.

**Secretary:** the Secretary of Health and Human Services and any other officer or employee of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to whom authority has been delegated.

### **Minimal Risk:**

review and written approval by the Secretary of DHHS (through OHRP) before any research activities may begin, including screening and enrollment.

**Department of Defense (DoD) Supported Research:**

1. Research involving prisoners of war as human participants is prohibited per Department of Defense regulations.
2. Research involving a detainee as a human participant is prohibited.
  - a. This prohibition does not apply to research involving investigational drugs and devices when the same products would be offered to US military personnel in the same location for the same condition.

**Unexpected incarceration of an enrolled subject:**

1. If a subject enrolled in ongoing research becomes incarcerated during the course of the project, and the research proposal was not reviewed and approved by the IRB in accordance with Subpart C of 45 CFR part 46, Investigators must promptly notify the IRB of this occurrence see: *IRB SOP: Requirements for Reporting to the IRB*.
2. All research interactions and interventions with, and obtaining identifiable private information about, the now-incarcerated subject must be suspended immediately, except as noted below.
  - a. OHRP allows one important exception to the requirement that all research activities with the now-incarcerated subject must cease until the regulatory requirements for research involving prisoners are met.
    - i. If the investigator asserts that it is in the best interests of the subject to remain in the research project while incarcerated, the IRB Chair may dededs(T[1.4.8(i)-.7(ecw.bb.551.3(y )}incac9) subDefense lc2(lcte(. )Tj the )5.5(s0(

subject and would not allow continued recruitment and enrollment of incarcerated subjects into the research.

- c. The institution(s) engaged in the research involving the incarcerated subject must send a certification to OHRP and wait for a letter of authorization in reply.
5. If the Investigator solicits or obtains information from the parents or spouse, rather than the incarcerated subject, for information about the incarcerated subject's behavior and attitudes for the research project. This activity would constitute "obtaining identifiable private information about" the incarcerated subject, and would invoke subpart C and would be require review and approval from the IRB if it was not originally reviewed and approved under subpart C.
6. During detention, the incarcerated subject does not have to be formally withdrawn; as long as there is no interaction, intervention or obtaining data with the subject while incarcerated (see above) subpart C is not invoked. Therefore, there is no need to withdraw and re-enroll. If the investigator can wait until the person is no longer incarcerated, subpart C is never an issue.
7. Data that had been acquired prior to incarceration may continue to be analyzed.

**CRITERIA THAT MUST BE SATISFIED:**

1. The IRB will review research involving prisoners and approve such research only if it finds that each of the following seven (7) conditions is met and documents the protocol-specific findings supporting that conclusion for each condition. Therefore, the Investigator must provide information addressing each of the following criteria:
  - a. The research under review represents one of the categories of research permissible under §46.306(a)(2) or 68 FR 36929, June 20, 2003:
    - i. Study of the possible causes, effects, and processes of incarceration, and of criminal behavior, provided that the project presents no more than minimal risk (the probability and magnitude of physical or psychological harm that is normally encountered in the daily lives, or in the routine medical, dental, or psychological examination of healthy persons) and no more than inconvenience to the subjects;
    - ii. Study of prisons as institutional structures or of prisoners as incarcerated persons, provided that the project presents no more than minimal risk (the probability and magnitude of physical or psychological harm that is normally encountered in the daily lives, or in the routine medical, dental, or psychological examination of healthy persons) and no more than inconvenience to the subjects;
    - iii. Research on conditions particularly affecting prisoners as a class (for example, vaccine trials and other research on hepatitis which is much more prevalent in prisons than elsewhere; and research on social and psychological problems such as alcoholism, drug addiction and sexual assaults) provided that the project may proceed only after the Secretary (through OHRP) has consulted with appropriate experts including experts in penology medicine and ethics, and published notice, in the FEDERAL REGISTER, of his intent to approve such research; or
    - iv. Research on practices, both innovative and accepted, which have the intent and reasonable probability of improving the health or well-being of the subject, but not studies involving control groups which may not benefit from the research. In cases in which the project requires the assignment of prisoners to a control group that may not benefit from the research, the project may proceed only after the Secretary (through OHRP) has consulted with appropriate experts, including experts in penology medicine and ethics, and published notice, in the FEDERAL REGISTER, of his intent to approve such research.

- v. The DHHS Secretarial waiver for certain epidemiological research conducted or supported by DHHS. Such research must have as its sole purpose:
  - f* to describe the prevalence or incidence of a disease by identifying all cases, or to study potential risk factor associations for a disease.
  - f*

**PROCEDURES:**

1. Investigators must complete and submit their projects to the IRB for review and indicate their eBridge SmartForm subjects which fall under the definition of prisoners will be included in the research project.
  - a. If the Investigator is amending their project to include this population, an amendment must be submitted and approved prospectively. Refer to *IRB SOP: Amendments* for more information.
2. Investigators are responsible to include any additional information as noted above in this policy with their eBridge SmartForm.

**REFERENCES:**

45 CFR 46 Subpart C  
45 CFR 46.305  
45 CFR 46.306  
68 FR 36929

**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:**

*IRB SOP: Amendments*

*IRB SOP: Requirements for Reporting to the IRB*

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