

Ethics review of research

present and future challenges

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Ethics and Health (ETH)

Overview

- Ethics & Health at WHO
- Current areas of work and future challenges

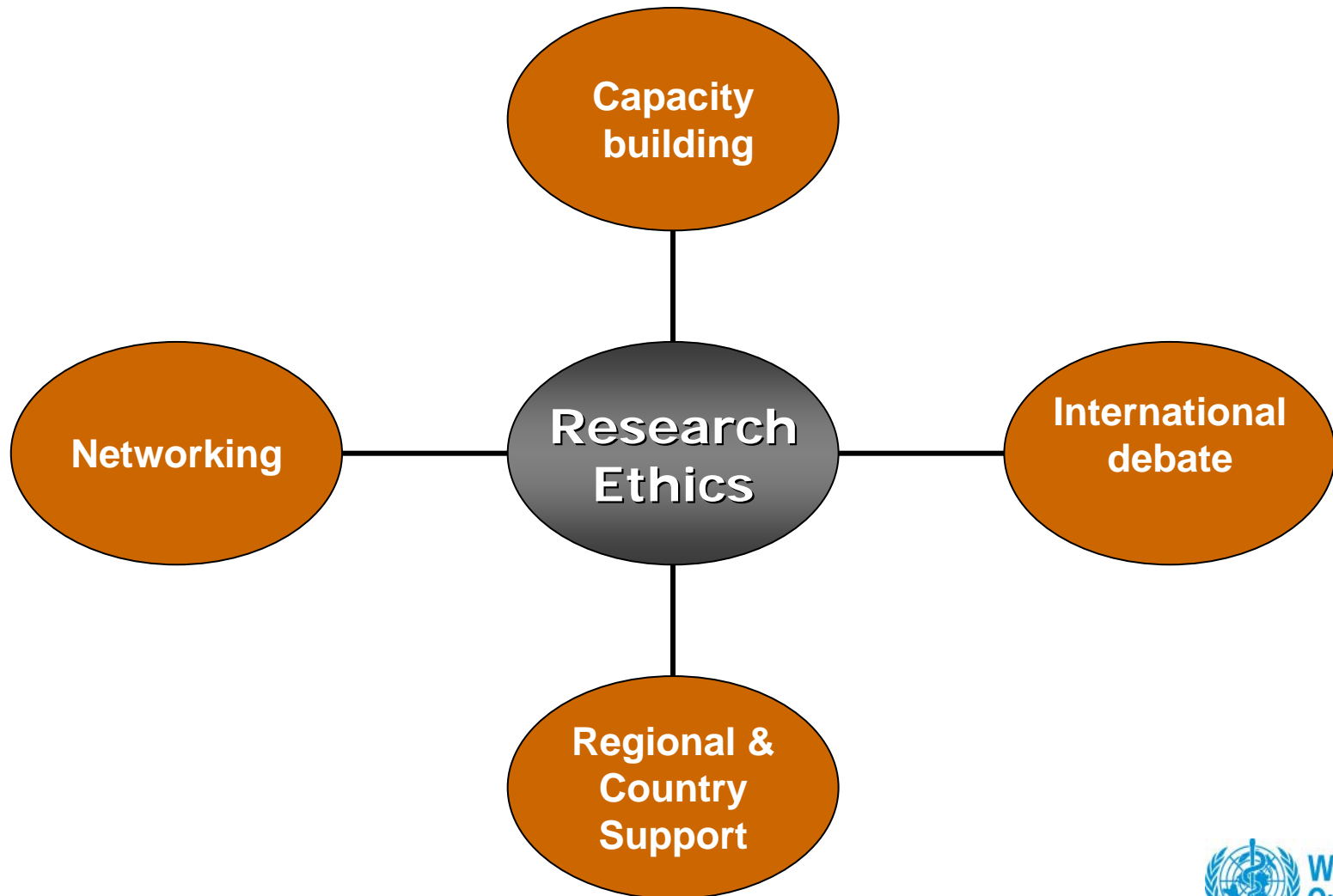
Ethics & Health at WHO

- Ethical aspects of public health and health care has been going on at WHO since its establishment in 1948
- HQ departments have been very active, in particular in the area of research ethics
 - e.g. training activities, normative documents
- In October 2002, the Director General established an Ethics & Health Unit to provide a focal point for the examination of the ethical issues raised by activities throughout the organization.

What do we want to achieve?

- To develop WHO **policies** and strategic approaches, ensuring ethical standards and analyses are included.
- To **strengthen capacity** in the Member States, enabling professionals and the public to incorporate ethics into their work.
- To collect and disseminate **information** on different aspects of ethics and health.
- To contribute to **international debate** on ethics and health, in collaboration with international organisations (governmental and non governmental), and academic centers.

Activities in research ethics



Activities in Research Ethics (cont.)

Capacity strengthening

- Training workshops
- Manual on RECs capacity building
(available in English, French and Spanish
http://www.who.int/eth/Ethics_basic_concepts_ENG.pdf)

Technical support, networking, international debate

- Regional meetings e.g. EMRO, PAHO
- Networking activities e.g. Pan African Clinical Trial Alliance
- International dialogue: e.g. Global Forum on Bioethics in Research, Global Summit of National Ethics Committees

Future challenges

Research Ethics in Epidemic Response

- A technical consultation took place in June 2009 to
 - identify ethical issues related to public health research and other activities such as surveys
 - provide guidance in this area, with specific focus on how prospective ethical review should take place for these activities
- Ethical oversight of activities in the "grey zone" between clinical research and public health activities

Improving enforcement of regulations and transparency in research

Pan African Clinical Trial Alliance

- Clarify functions and responsibilities of
 - **REC and NRA**, and other stakeholders
 - **ethics review / authorization / registration**
- Strengthen capacities of ethics review
 - better use of existing training tools and resources
 - strategic plan
- **Harmonize** rules and procedures at regional level (avoiding "*shopping*")

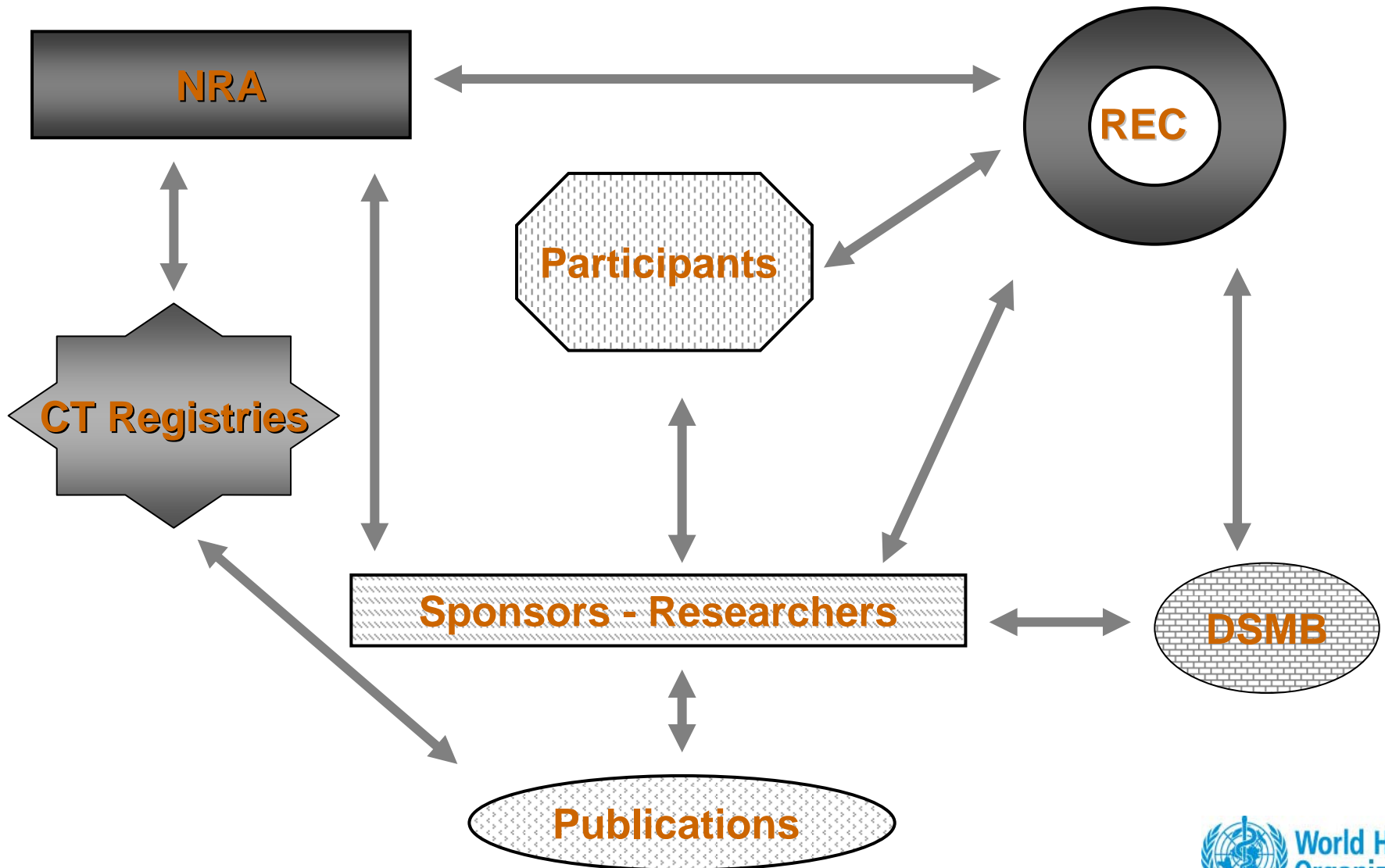
Assessing outcomes of ethics review

Beyond the implementation of procedures, the impact of the ethics review system needs to be evaluated in terms of

- Quality of research e.g. minimizing R/B for potential participants and their community
- Quality of information and participants decision process e.g. understanding of participants rights
- Social benefit of research e.g. addressing 10/90 gap

How to address these new challenges in the context of research for health?

Partnership within different stakeholders



How do we work?

Partnership

- based on **synergies** between WHO and other international organizations, regional and national initiatives, avoiding duplications of work and fragmentation of initiatives
- including **all** relevant stake holders

How do we work?

- Focal Points in each of the six WHO Regional Offices and Internal Working Group on Ethics and Health
- Global network of WHO Collaborating Centers for Bioethics
Universities of Toronto, Chile, Miami, Canberra, Zurich
and Espace Ethique (Paris)
- Collaboration with other UN agencies, intergovernmental organizations, and NGOs
(UN-IACB, IBC, CIGB, CDBI, EU, CIOMS, WMA, etc.)



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Articulating ethical and evidence-based policy options