



Lebanese Republic

Ministry of Public Health

The Director General

Archive number: 1/1

Beirut on: 12 June 2017

Circular number 48

Related to the regulation of studies in the field of mental health and psychosocial support

Based on decision number 141/4 related to the establishment of a mechanism for the accreditation of ethics committees for clinical trials and studies targeting humans

As the Ministry of Public Health is keen on ensuring the safety and protection of residents of Lebanon, particularly of vulnerable groups including displaced persons and refugees.

As the respect of ethics in research is a critical matter, especially in the field of mental health, and particularly in the context of humanitarian crises during which participants in research may be in need of evidence-based mental health and psychosocial support interventions.

As the Ministry of Public Health is keen on ensuring that any pilot or research study in the field of mental health and psychosocial support conducted in Lebanon does not present any risk on persons participating in it and respects ethical guidelines.

We therefore emphasize the following:

- Obtaining prior informed consent from participants in the study, while ensuring that:
 - Content of the informed consent form contains enough information about the study, its aims and its design, and the risks or disruption the participant in the study may be subjected to.
 - Informed consent form is written in a language that is understandable by the participant
 - Content of the informed consent form is read to the participant in a clear way
- Children and persons who do not have the capacity to make decisions regarding their participation cannot be involved in any study unless approval from their legal guardian is received and they cannot be coerced to participate if they do not want to do so.

- Ensuring confidentiality of information on the participants acquired from the study and refraining from disclosing the information to any third party un-related to the study.
- Receiving prior official approval from the Ministry of Public Health to conduct the study after submitting the following documents:
 1. Official ethical approval for the study from an ethics committee that is affiliated to a university or a hospital and that is officially authorized by the Ministry of Public Health.
 2. Final protocol for the study
- As such, it is recommended to communicate with the National Mental Health Programme at the Ministry of Public Health since the beginning of the project from the concept note phase to ensure that the study is in line with the national standards and that recommended amendments by the Ministry of Public Health are integrated in it.

All stakeholders including United Nations agencies, international and local non-governmental organizations, international and local universities, orders, syndicates, associations and others are asked to abide by this circular.



Walid Ammar MD, Ph.D

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Walid Ammar', written over a horizontal line.

Director General
Ministry of Public Health