The NUS-IRB hopes to keep our researchers updated on the latest ethical issues and problems occurring around the world. This will help us keep abreast of international best practices to ensure that research done in Singapore will be well accepted, scientifically and ethically. These news alerts will be issued as and when incidents are reported.

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NUS-IRB STATEMENT ON THE USE OF LUCKY DRAWS FOR RECRUITMENT OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

The NUS Institutional Review Board (IRB) had received several queries from researchers on the use of lucky draws for the recruitment of research participants in research. As such, the Board felt that it would be helpful to researchers for a statement to be issued on the same.

The IRB’s Statement on the use of lucky draws for the recruitment of research participants in research is given below:

Preamble
1. The NUS-IRB is responsible for reviewing the ethical aspects of all NUS research projects that involve human subjects.

2. The NUS-IRB had recently considered requests from researchers to allow the use of lucky draws in the recruitment of human subjects for research.

Exclusion
3. The NUS-IRB’s position is that ALL biomedical research studies that involve clinical interventions or experiments which carry some risk of harm would NOT be considered for lucky draws.

Principle of Reimbursement
4. The general rule is still to allow for reimbursement to research participants for participation (if reimbursement is provided) in research studies.

Guidelines
5. However, the NUS-IRB is prepared to consider the use of lucky draws in the recruitment of human subjects for research in a limited way and on a case-by-case basis, taking the following considerations into account:

a) Every research participant must have an equal chance of
winning;

b) The value of the prize must be reasonable. When reviewing a proposed prize(s), IRB would consider the disparity between the standard guidance on reimbursement that subjects would have received and the value of the prize(s) that subjects are offered for the same study participation. This disparity should not be such as to exert undue influence on the participants’ willingness to participate in the research study;

c) Any future increase in the number of research participants participating in the research will include provisions for making similar prizes (with similar odds of winning) available to the additional subjects.

d) Subjects can opt out of participating in the lucky draw if they wish; and

e) When there is little or insufficient funding for the research study, or individual payments are not feasible due to the large number of research participants. However, do note that the IRB may not necessarily find this argument persuasive or compelling.

Please contact the IRB Secretariat at 6516 4311 or 6516 7359 or email at irb@nus.edu.sg if you require further assistance or information.

About NUS-IRB
NUS Institutional Review Board (NUS-IRB) was established on 1st September 2003. This Board (also referred to as the Research Ethics Committee in some countries) will review, approve and monitor the ethical aspects of all NUS research projects that involve human subjects and human tissues/cells/data. Its main objective is to protect the rights and welfare of human research subjects in research activities conducted by NUS students and researchers.

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