Reviewer's report

Title: Research ethics in the Middle East: A review of national research ethics regulations and guidelines

Version: 1 Date: 30 August 2012

Reviewer: Iva Sorta-Bilajac

Reviewer's report:

Dear authors,

First, allow me to express my interest in your paper! I believe it is of importance for all of us working in the field of medical ethics. Also, I do hope it will be recognized as an important step forward towards meeting international ethical standards in the countries of Middle East regarding research ethics.

I would like to emphasize that this paper brings a detailed description of the research ethics regulations existing or lacking in the 13 countries of the Middle East. Research methods were chosen and described accordingly. The results are presented in 3 tables and 1 figure, and well discussed. The limitations of the study are clearly stated. Tables are easy to read.

I do have some Minor Essential Revisions to suggest:

1. you might consider asking a native English speaker for a revision of your manuscript (for example, last paragraph on page 11; fifth sentence on page 12 - specifically is mentioned twice; first subtitle of the Discussion - Economic power leads TO advances; last sentence of the second paragraph in the page 15, etc.);

2. please check the reference list and write them accordingly to the guidelines for authors (especially ref 26);

3. in the page 3, regarding chapter Background, it might be interesting to mention also the Code of William Beaumont, as one of the first texts regarding the position of the research subject;

4. you might consider some of the readings suggested bellow:

The legal grounds regarding clinical trial in Turkey.
Büken NO, Büken E.

A multicenter study of the awareness and attitudes of Egyptian faculty towards research ethics: a pilot study.
Barriers to conducting clinical research in reproductive medicine: Egypt.
Aboulghar M.

Knowledge, Awareness, and Attitudes about Research Ethics among Dental Faculty in the Middle East: A Pilot Study.

Saudi views on consenting for research on medical records and leftover tissue samples.
Al-Qadire MM, Hammami MM, Abdulhameed HM, Al Gaai EA.

Development of an accessible self-assessment tool for research ethics committees in developing countries.

Identifying structures, processes, resources and needs of research ethics committees in Egypt.
Sleem H, El-Kamary SS, Silverman HJ.

Stem cell research in the Greater Middle East: the importance of establishing policy and ethics interoperability to foster international collaborations.
Flynn JM, Matthews KR.

I do hope you will find my comments benevolent and in good faith for the sole purpose of bringing your interesting paper as closely as possible to the acceptance for publication in the BMC Medical Ethics.

With deep regards,

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**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.