Reviewer's report

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

Version: 1 Date: 7 October 2012

Reviewer: Farzaneh Zahedi

Reviewer's report:

This valuable research discusses an interesting and important issue in countries where their socio-cultural context is different from Western societies. However, it needs some major revisions before a decision on publication can be made.

Major Compulsory Revisions:

1. The title is broader than content; since the paper just examines research ethics regulations in Arab countries in the region. Both phrases of “research ethics” and “Middle East” should be revised.

2. In abstract, the readers should be provided with some details of results.

3. Methods part is confusing in some parts. Authors intended to compare the guidelines with international guidelines, but any appropriate scientific method for comparison is defined in “Methods”. For structured comparison, a list of various elements and main ethical items (or protections) in international guidelines can be helpful for achieving this goal.

4. In conclusion, the subtitle “Economic power leads advances” and its content cannot be supported by this study. Also, the long subtitle of “Are international research ethics guidelines a proper measure to...” Is an interesting debate which should be mentioned firstly in the introduction (background) of the paper and then discussed here.

Minor Essential Revisions:

1. In background, updating the date of last version of international guidelines is necessary. Also, the last paragraph is so long and needs minor revisions of verbs tenses.

2. Results presented in the tables should not be replicated in the text. In addition, reference to the documents in tables by symbols such as * and ** is not appropriate.

3. Although the writing is acceptable, minor revisions are necessary.

Discretionary Revisions:

1. The columns related to five countries without national codes and guidelines
can be deleted from table 2.

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.