

Call for applications

The Eighth Global Forum on Bioethics in Research **June 27-29, 2007**

Vilnius, Lithuania

Closing Date: 15-Feb-2007

The Eighth Global Forum on Bioethics in Research (GFBR 8) will take place in Vilnius, Lithuania, on June 27-29, 2007. It will be organized by the Medical Faculty of Vilnius University in cooperation with Union Graduate College Bioethics Program (USA) and other partners in the Global Forum on Bioethics in Research. English and French will be the official languages of the Forum.

The Global Forum on Bioethics in Research is a global collaborative effort to strengthen ethical international health research. The current group of partners are the Wellcome Trust (UK); the Fogarty International Center at NIH (USA); Medical Research Council (UK); Council on Health Research for Development (COHRED) (Switzerland); National Institute of Health and Medical Research (INSERM) (France); Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLACSO) (Argentina); Aga Khan University (Pakistan); World Health Organization – Department of Ethics, Trade, Human Rights and Health Law; Vilnius University (Lithuania); and Union Graduate College (USA). This year funding is provided by the Wellcome Trust, Medical Research Council, the Fogarty International Center at NIH, INSERM, the European Union through COHRED, and the Advanced Certificate Program in Research Ethics in Central and Eastern Europe sponsored by Vilnius University and Union Graduate College.

All the previous meetings have been based on the following general objectives:

- To maintain and strengthen the protection of human participants in medical research.
- To provide a forum for developing country perspectives on ethical issues in research.
- To explore opportunities to enhance capacity for the ethical review of research.
- To create a context for research involving human subjects in which developing and developed country scientists, ethicists, community representatives, policy-makers, industry, and other relevant stakeholders can address ethical issues in ways that allow expeditious long-term joint management of research protocols.

The theme of the 8th meeting will clearly reflect the general aims and will focus on **Fostering the Research Ethics Infrastructure in the Developing World / Transition Societies**. A special

emphasis during the conference will also be made on the **ethical aspects of mental health research**.

While the number of biomedical research projects and clinical trials conducted in the developing world and transition societies has been increasing dramatically, the research ethics infrastructure - the education and training of ethicists and scientists and the development of functional research ethics committees supported by a positive regulatory environment - has not kept pace and remains a major challenge for bioethics. Therefore, the focus of this conference is to identify and disseminate best practices related to:

- Establishing Research Ethics Committees (RECs)/Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) at the national/regional/local levels and creating a positive regulatory environment;
- Models for training in research ethics;
- Models for establishing supportive networks among ethicists and their organizations at both national and international levels;
- Enhancing capacity for the ethical review and conduct of mental health research.

The capacity of GFBR 8 is 120 delegates. Funding will be available to sponsor only delegates from developing/transitional countries, although applicants from other countries are welcome to apply if they are able to self-fund attendance. It is considered essential to maintain the balance of delegates from the North and the South and the East and the West with a majority coming from developing countries and transition societies.

The GFBR 8 Steering Committee asks all those interested in attending the 8th Forum to make an application in the manner detailed below.

Applications

If you would like to make an application to attend the Forum, please apply in writing including:

- A brief statement explaining why you would like to take part in the Forum, how you think you would benefit, and how you might be able to contribute. We would be particularly interested in applicants' experience of developing ethical review processes for research or their local implementation. We would also be interested in applications with relevance to ethical issues relating to mental health research (not more than 500 words);
- A short (1 page) CV;
- A description of your current work (150 words);

- A list of recent publications, especially those relating to the theme of this Forum;
- Name and contact details of one referee.

Awards: Decision Making and Eligibility for Funding

Successful applicants from developing/transition countries will receive an award to cover: return travel to the meeting, including standard airfare and standard ground transportation costs; registration for **GFBR 8**, including meeting materials; accommodation (3 or 4 nights maximum); full board; and a copy of any publication resulting from the meeting. Participants will be expected to meet all other costs.

The GFBR 8 Steering Committee will decide on successful candidates (both self-funded and those applying for funded places) in February 2007. The decision criteria will include the following factors:

- Country of origin. The Forum would like to ensure a representative distribution of delegates from different regions;
- Background /current area of expertise. The Forum is aimed at researchers, ethicists, policy-makers, field workers, etc. The Forum seeks representation from many different disciplines;
- Membership of an IRB/REC. Membership of an IRB/REC is not a prerequisite for attending a Forum but may be taken into consideration;
- Experience of ethics. We hope to encourage a mixture of 'old' and 'new' faces at the Forum so that delegates can productively discuss issues of concern to them and gain from the perspectives of others. Applicants need not necessarily be experts in ethics;
- Reasons for attending the meeting. We hope to attract delegates who will be able to actively contribute to the meeting and who expect to impact on research ethics/pursue a career in research ethics in their own country.

Delegates will be informed of the decision of the GFBR 8 Steering Committee as soon as possible toward the end of February. The Steering Committee decision will be final.

Please send your application by email to GFBR@mf.vu.lt and igiraite@gmail.com

or **fax:** +3705 2398743