

Evaluation of the REC Boot Camp of the European Network of Research Ethics and Research Integrity 26–27.3.2019 in Prague

1. Objectives

The aim of the Boot Camp was to provide participants updates on

- research involving minors,
- create space for discussion on the topic, and
- allow exchange of insights and experiences relevant in the work of research ethics committees.

The objectives were met, on a scale from 1-5 (1=very poorly, 3=neither well nor poorly, 5=very well) with average ratings between 4.75–4.87. These ratings appear overall relatively high.

The Boot Camp involved altogether 22 participants including organizers and speakers. One of the characteristics of a boot camp is that it is peer-to-peer training, and therefore we do not separate between participants, speakers and organizers. The only distinction made was that organizers did not provide feedback.

2. Learning and engagement

To make the Boot Camp interactive, activities included work on two medical cases, a simulation of an ethics review board in non-medical fields, and discussion items.

When asked the participants what they learnt and what kind of insights they made, the following were mentioned (number of times this aspect has been mentioned within parentheses):

- The differences among member states on issues concerning research with minors (3)
- The issue of informed consent given by children (2)
- Patient and child participation (1)
- The issues and challenges when starting research with minors (1)
- New ways how to handle informed consent regarding children/Examples of best practices (2)
- Different attitudes toward ethical, sensitive questions (1)
- Medical research & Humanities/Social sciences deal with similar issues/ Case discussions on non-medical cases (2)
- The importance of the interdisciplinary collaboration (1)
- New information regarding EU regulations (1)

Participants evaluated their own engagement with the topic and the activities as a 4.37 on average (scale 1-5; 1=I was not actively engaged at all, 3=I was actively engaged some of the

tim3, 5=I was very actively engaged all the time) indicating a high level of engagement with the tasks and activities.

They evaluated their own input in the activities as a 4.00 on an average (scale 1-5; 1= I feel that I did not contribute to discussions and/or group work, 3=I feel that I contributed some to discussions and/or group work, 5= I feel that I contributed a lot to discussions and/or group work).

When asked what facilitated the learning experience, the participants highlighted the following:

- Excellent lecturers/presenters (3)
- Working together in a group was very fascinating, educative and effective (3)
- Interaction with experts (1)
- The active involvement through case studies, and the opportunity to present the results of intersections in real-time, during the meetings and not at a later stage (1)

Reasons for why participants might not have been able to fully contribute included unfamiliarity with medical research (1), language difficulties (1), and dislike of speaking publicly (1).

3. Expectations and overall experience

The Boot Camp met expectations with an average of 4.62 corresponding to the response alternative "It filled many of my expectations" on a scale from 1-5. The participants' overall experience of the BC was rated at 4.62 on average (1=very unsatisfied, 3=neutral, 5=very satisfied). This rating appears relatively high and suggests that most of the participants were very satisfied with their BC experience.

Participants mentioned the BC in Prague as a very good and valuable experience. One of the participants commented his/her positively experience as follows: "Variety in the programme: presentations and workgroups".

4. Improvement suggestions

Suggestions on what to do differently included the following: Receiving the programme and the case studies earlier (3), including a broader selection of fields (1), shorter presentations (1), and another type of facilities (1).