

## Institutional Code of Ethics for Research

### **Dr. Vithalrao Vikhe Patil Foundation College of Physiotherapy, Ahilyanagar**

#### **Preamble**

The Research and Development (R&D) Cell of Dr. Vithalrao Vikhe Patil Foundation College of Physiotherapy is committed to promoting ethical, responsible, and high-quality research. The College believes that research integrity is fundamental to scientific advancement, evidence-based physiotherapy practice, and societal welfare. This Code of Ethics provides guiding principles for faculty, researchers, postgraduate and undergraduate students, interns, and collaborators engaged in research activities.

#### **1. Research Integrity and Ethical Conduct**

- Conduct research with honesty, integrity, transparency, and professionalism.
- Ensure accuracy in research design, data collection, analysis, interpretation, and reporting.
- Strictly prohibit fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, duplicate publication, and any form of scientific misconduct.
- Disclose research funding, conflicts of interest, and study limitations honestly.

#### **2. Protection of Human Participants and Patient Rights**

- Obtain prior approval from the Institutional Ethics Committee (IEC) before commencing research involving human participants.
- Obtain voluntary informed consent from all participants before enrollment.
- Respect participants' dignity, privacy, confidentiality, and right to withdraw without penalty.
- Ensure that research risks are minimized and expected benefits outweigh potential harm.
- Follow national ethical guidelines for biomedical and health research.

#### **3. Ethical Conduct in Animal Research**

- Conduct animal research only when scientifically justified and after obtaining approval from the appropriate Animal Ethics Committee.
- Follow the principles of Replacement, Reduction, and Refinement (3Rs).
- Ensure humane treatment and minimize pain and distress to animals.

#### **4. Accountability and Institutional Oversight**

- Obtain all necessary ethical, scientific, and administrative approvals before initiating research.
- Maintain complete and accurate research documentation for audit and verification.
- Cooperate with institutional monitoring and periodic review of research activities.
- Comply with the policies of the College, affiliated university, and regulatory authorities.

#### **5. Professionalism and Research Collaboration**

- Promote mutual respect, fairness, and transparency in collaborative research.
- Assign authorship based solely on significant intellectual contribution in accordance with accepted international guidelines.
- Acknowledge contributions of collaborators, institutions, and funding agencies appropriately.
- Resolve disputes related to authorship, intellectual property, or ethics through institutional mechanisms.

## **6. Social Responsibility and Community Benefit**

- Conduct research that advances physiotherapy practice, rehabilitation sciences, and public health.
- Encourage community-based, patient-centered, and evidence-based research addressing local and national healthcare priorities.
- Promote equitable access to research benefits while protecting vulnerable populations.
- Ensure environmentally responsible research practices and sustainable use of resources.

## **7. Research Data Management**

- Maintain accurate, secure, and complete research records.
- Preserve confidentiality of participant information and institutional data.
- Store research data according to institutional policies and applicable legal requirements.
- Share research data responsibly while safeguarding privacy, confidentiality, and intellectual property rights.

## **8. Publication Ethics and Intellectual Property**

- Publish research findings honestly, accurately, and without unnecessary delay.
- Avoid plagiarism, duplicate publication, salami publication, and inappropriate authorship practices.
- Disclose financial support and conflicts of interest in all publications.
- Promote patents, copyrights, innovation, and technology transfer arising from institutional research.

## **9. Conflict of Interest**

- Declare all financial, professional, or personal interests that may influence research outcomes.
- Ensure that conflicts of interest do not compromise scientific objectivity or participant welfare.
- Follow institutional procedures for managing identified conflicts.

## **10. Education and Capacity Building**

- Participate in regular training on research methodology, publication ethics, plagiarism prevention, data management, Good Clinical Practice (GCP), and Responsible Conduct of Research.
- Encourage continuous learning and ethical decision-making among faculty and students.
- Seek guidance from the Institutional Ethics Committee or R&D Cell whenever ethical concerns arise.

## **11. Compliance with Laws and Regulations**

- Conduct all research in accordance with applicable national and international laws, ethical guidelines, and regulatory requirements.
- Comply with the guidelines of the Institutional Ethics Committee (IEC), Maharashtra University of Health Sciences (MUHS), Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), and other relevant regulatory authorities.
- Ensure compliance with data protection, intellectual property, and biosafety regulations wherever applicable.

## **12. Reporting Misconduct and Disciplinary Action**

- Report suspected research misconduct, plagiarism, data fabrication, falsification, or ethical violations promptly through appropriate institutional channels.
- Protect the confidentiality of individuals reporting genuine concerns.

- Investigate allegations fairly, impartially, and confidentially.
- Violations of this Code may result in corrective measures, withdrawal of research approval, retraction of publications, suspension of research activities, disciplinary action, or other actions as deemed appropriate by the institution.

### **Commitment**

All faculty members, researchers, postgraduate and undergraduate students, interns, and collaborators of Dr. Vithalrao Vikhe Patil Foundation College of Physiotherapy are expected to uphold this Institutional Code of Ethics and contribute to a culture of responsible, ethical, transparent, and high-quality research that advances physiotherapy education, rehabilitation sciences, healthcare, and community well-being.