

Ethical challenges in global research on violence against women and health

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This paper aims to explore new ethical challenges in global health service research on VAW.

VAW

Healthcare services

Global health

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"Ethics is not something else in the research, ethics is in the core of methodology."

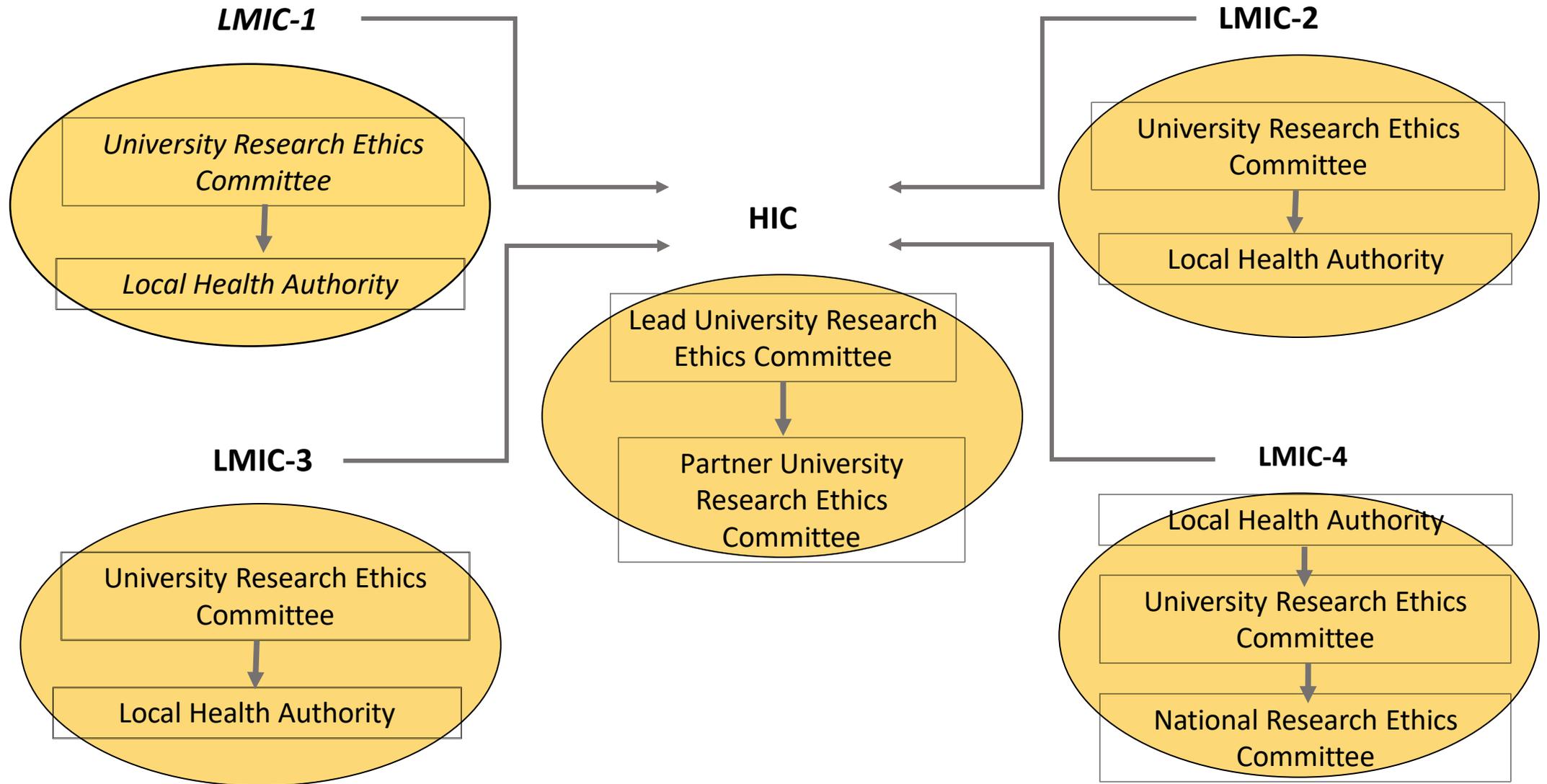
LMIC1R

VAW

Healthcare services

Global health

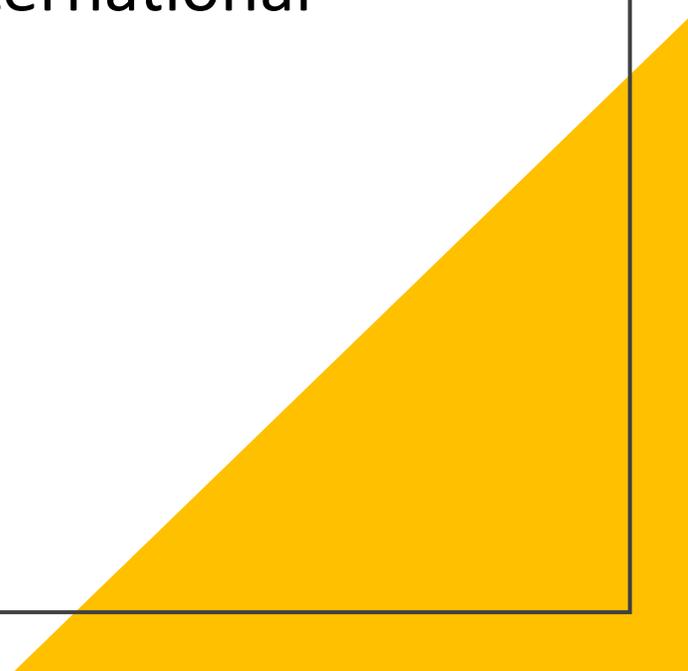
THE GROUP



Qualitative Study

- (i) semi-structured interviews with researchers and Research Ethics Boards (REBs) members involved with ethics approval
- (ii) documentary analysis of policies and guidelines on ethics in global research and research on VAW, both national and international

Exploring the data

- Read Extract Analyse Distil (READ) approach
 - Framework method
 - network of Ethical Relationship
- 
- A large yellow triangle is positioned in the bottom right corner of the slide, pointing towards the top right.

RESULTS

Interviews

HIC

2 Researchers

2 REB Members

LMIC 1

3 Researchers

2 REB Members

LMIC 2

1 Researcher

2 REB Member

LMIC 3

3 Researchers

1 REB Member

LMIC 4

2 Researchers

Documents

7 Institutional

4 International

16 National

of which:

LMIC1 4

LMIC2 2

LMIC3 2

LMIC4 4

HIC 11

RESULTS

1. Challenges resulted from the global nature of the group

- Expectations based of HIC context
- Different conceptualizations of violence, with HICs often prevailing
- HICs perception of LMIC as less capable
- HIC led ethics application
- Difficulties in harmonizing different country regulations
- Open and honest communication as a solution

RESULTS

2. Challenges resulted from the studies location in healthcare setting

- Adds the need for approval from another REB (research ethics board)
- Health REBs sometimes have different expectations than the ones in the Universities
- Harmonizing research with existing health policies
- Biomedical nature of existing regulation for research on healthcare settings

RESULTS

3. Challenges resulted from the VAW topic
 - Resistance to dealing with VAW in international partnerships
 - Lack of clear definitions of vulnerable groups, where research subjects are often placed
 - Differing measures to assure safety in the different countries
 - Lack of education of the topic for REBs and researchers

DISCUSSION

- All the challenges interact and intersect
- Power imbalances between HICs and LMICs mark the process
- Harmonizing policies from different countries and different sectors creates extra challenges
- There is a lack of guidance of VAW research in healthcare settings
- The sensitivity of VAW makes the research more difficult and ethics more important

CONCLUSION

- These challenges have a negative impact on researchers' relationships and in the delivery of projects
- The process of ethics approval for global research on VAW and health should be more flexible, with equal power distribution between researchers and RECs in the studied high-income HIC and LMICs
- While some of these objectives can be achieved through education for RECs and researchers, the contextual factors should be addressed at the institutional and funder levels

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