



Unlocking the Potential of Public Health Research in the Caribbean and Latin America

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The Gill-Lebovic Center for Community Health in the Caribbean and Latin America investigated the regulations for conducting human subject's research in the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. Camila Roberts, an MPH student at the Milken Institute School of Public Health and regulatory specialist for the World Bank conducted the research on behalf of the Center. Her findings shed light on the ethical guidelines and regulatory landscapes faced by public health practitioners across the region.

Public health practitioners in these countries face a complex landscape of ethical guidelines and regulatory frameworks. The efforts to establish ethical standards are guided by universally recognized principles. The four countries studied do adhere to the ethical principles established by the United Nations but have varying levels of development in their regulatory frameworks.

The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations and has supported the development of ethical frameworks in these countries. Regulations in these countries enforce ethical standards in research activities involving human participants. The Dominican Republic and El Salvador have established national ethics research committees with broad jurisdiction. Honduras and Guatemala handle research protocols and ethics committees through national regulatory authorities.

While all four countries have implemented policies to support ethical research, public health practitioners should be prepared for variability in regulatory development and institutional capacity among these countries. PAHO's evaluation framework provides valuable information for health-related research involving human subjects. Researchers should familiarize themselves with ethical requirements, engage with local experts, prioritize community engagement, and adapt their research designs to meet local ethical standards.

The Council of Health Ministers of Central America and the Dominican Republic platform offers an opportunity for countries to strengthen research ethics frameworks. Public health practitioners also play a crucial role in upholding ethical standards and contributing to the development of robust research ethics frameworks in the region. By fostering collaboration and knowledge exchange, practitioners are instrumental in shaping the future of research ethics in the Caribbean and Latin America.

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