

procedures, it will be helpful to let the researchers know as you may need to undergo some special tests or procedures for your safety before leaving. This is to make sure that you do not suffer problems related to the study. You should not be forced to come back for the safety tests, but it is important for your own safety that you do so. If you suffer any discomfort or illness that you think may be due to the research, you should alert the researchers regardless of whether you decide to continue participating in the research or not.

How You Can Get More Information about Your Participation, or if You have a Problem

The Medical Research Council of Zimbabwe (MRCZ) is a body that has been set up by the Ministry of Health and Child Care to protect the interests of people who participate in research. All research that is conducted among humans in Zimbabwe needs to have been reviewed and approved by the MRCZ or a research ethics committee recognised by the MRCZ, to make sure that the rights, safety and dignity of research participants are protected.

The Africa University Research Ethics Committee (AUREC) has been granted authorisation by the MRCZ to review some categories of research proposals to ensure the protection of human participants.

Therefore, whenever you are approached by researchers to participate in a study it is your right to ask to see the approval stamp of the MRCZ, or an authorised research ethics committee such as AUREC. The MRCZ conducts inspections and follows up all research they previously approved in Zimbabwe. The MRCZ also responds to questions and complaints from participants. Any member of the public can call them to get information, or register concerns and complaints. Their numbers during office hours are 04-791792 or 04-791193. The 24 hour cell phone number, which also has WhatsApp facilities is 0772 433 167. E-mail is mrcz@mrcz.org.zw

For research studies conducted by Africa University or its affiliates, or research whose documents bear the approval stamp of the Africa University Research Ethics Committee (AUREC), you can phone AUREC on +263 (20) 60075/ 60026/ 61611, or send an e-mail to aurec@africau.edu, or contact the MRCZ.



Your Rights Concerning Participation in Research Studies

This information was prepared for you by AUREC in collaboration with the MRCZ.

Africa University Research Ethics Committee (AUREC)

Fairview Road, Off Nyanga Road, Old Mutare
PO Box 1320,
Mutare, Zimbabwe
Tel: +263 20 60075 / 60026 / 61611
Email: aurec@africau.edu
Website: www.africau.edu



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Africa University Research Ethics Committee

AUREC

General Information

Research is an organised way of collecting information to help understand problems, or to test ideas aimed at solving problems that occur in society. People have been asked to participate in research by answering questions or providing some kind of information or biological samples. While research is meant for the benefit of society, there are cases where research has caused harm to persons, families or communities. Therefore, humans who participate in research have a right to be respected, and to be protected from harm that may occur due to their participation in research. This harm may be to the body, but sometimes it can also be to the mind, to family relationships, to your financial standing or the community in which you live. In this pamphlet, we give you information that you should know to help you make a decision about participating or refusing to participate in research.

Your Rights as a Research Participant

If you are asked to participate in a research study, you have the right to receive full information about the study, to help you make up your mind whether to join the study or not. It is your right to ask questions to the researcher. It is also your right to decide to consent or not to consent to participate in a study without being forced or threatened. You have the right to take your time to reach a decision. There should not be any bad consequences if you refuse to participate.

What Information should you know if you decide to Volunteer to participate in Research?

Before you make a decision to participate or not to participate in a study, the researcher should give you the following information about the research:

- ♦ Why the research study is being done
- ♦ Why you are being asked to participate
- ♦ Why they selected you to be part of their study
- ♦ How many people will be participating in the study together with you
- ♦ Details of the processes that will happen during the research
- ♦ What you will be asked to do if you participate in the study
- ♦ How long the study will last
- ♦ Any expected risks or discomforts that you may experience as you participate in the research
- ♦ Expected costs to you
- ♦ Expected benefits
- ♦ Details of any payment or reimbursements
- ♦ How information about participants will be kept confidential
- ♦ Reasons why a participant might be asked to stop participating in the research
- ♦ Contact details of people who can give you more information, or answer your questions about the study, including what to do in any study related emergencies
- ♦ Details of people who can give you more information about your rights as a study participant
- ♦ How you will be told the results of the research.

What are the benefits of Participating in Research?

Most research is not intended to benefit you directly. However, by participating in research, you will be helping in the solving of problems that affect society.

Payment for Participating in a Research Study

Payment will be explained to you during the informed consent process. Some studies may not have the financial resources to pay for your participation, whilst others may pay you enough to cover expenses such as transportation and meals. The payment should not be so much that it may convince you to take risks that you would not otherwise take.

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What Happens if You Decide to Leave a Research Study?

You always have the right to stop participating in the research at any time, and for any reason. You are not obliged to explain your reasons for leaving the study to anyone, although it helps the researcher to know. For example, you might feel less comfortable about participating in the research than you thought you would, or maybe the research takes too much of your time. Nobody should pressure you into staying in the research if you no longer want to. However it may be useful to discuss your problems with the researcher before leaving. If you leave a medical research where you have been taking some drugs or going through some medical

