

Conducting research

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Research is essential to the successful promotion and protection of sexual and relationship health and wellbeing and to the development of sexual and relationship therapy. Members are encouraged to support research undertaken on behalf of the profession and to participate actively in research work.

The dignity, rights, safety, and well-being of participants must be a primary focus of consideration in any research study. Participants must give informed consent freely and have the right to withdraw at any time during the research.

A participant's entitlement to receiving services should not be affected by their consent or refusal to participate in any research. All research should pass through the agency of Universities' research committees or other appropriate body.

Members should consider carefully the following key areas as well as the COSRT Code of Ethics before embarking on any research with human subjects:

- Any research involving participants must conform to the World Medical Association Declaration of Helsinki 1964 www.wma.net/en/30publications/10policies/b3/ as modified by the 59th WMA General Assembly, Seoul, Korea, October 2008, or such other declaration or modification which may be adopted from time to time. This provides guidelines and basic principles for combining research involving human subjects with professional care.
- Dignity: Participants must always be treated with respect and dignity. The aims and goals of the research and their involvement therein should be explained fully for an informed consent to be given.
- Rights and well-being: Participants have the right to space to reflect on their willingness or refusal to participate and to withdraw at any time. The right to access of services should not be affected by their willingness or refusal to participate.
- Safety: Confidentiality of the participant is paramount. Participants must give specific permission to use any information made available in the therapeutic relationship for the purpose of research, including information for statistical purposes. If a videotape, film, or other electronic recording is made, consent must be in writing and must specify how that information will be used, for example, for other professionals, students, assessors, the public etc. If published in any format, details of the participant are to be restricted to the minimum required to ensure confidentiality. Participants must be informed of the persons who will have access to personal data, how will be used and how long the data will be kept. Any data sharing agreement should form part of the contract with the participant and requires explicit written consent. Contacts of agencies should be available to participants in case of any psychological disturbance following participation in research. COSRT Members will be aware

that professional indemnity insurance is an essential requirement for all practising therapists including trainee therapists.