The 12 tasks of a REC chair

A series of Health Research Authority short webinars

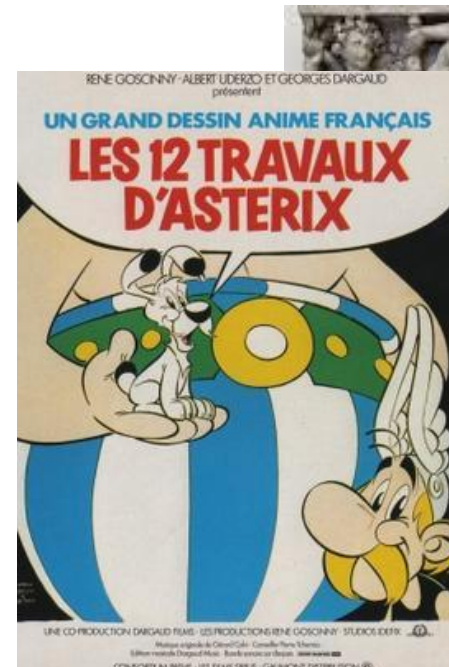Paul Gapper and Hugh Davies

The 12 tasks of a REC chair

NHS
Health Research Authority

1. **Ensuring REC members understand their purpose.**
2. **Ensuring the committee follows proper procedure.**
3. Helping members deliberate on research applications.
4. Working with applicants on the committee.
5. Helping members make good decisions.
6. Helping resolve disagreements.
7. Helping REC members.
8. Developing committee expertise.
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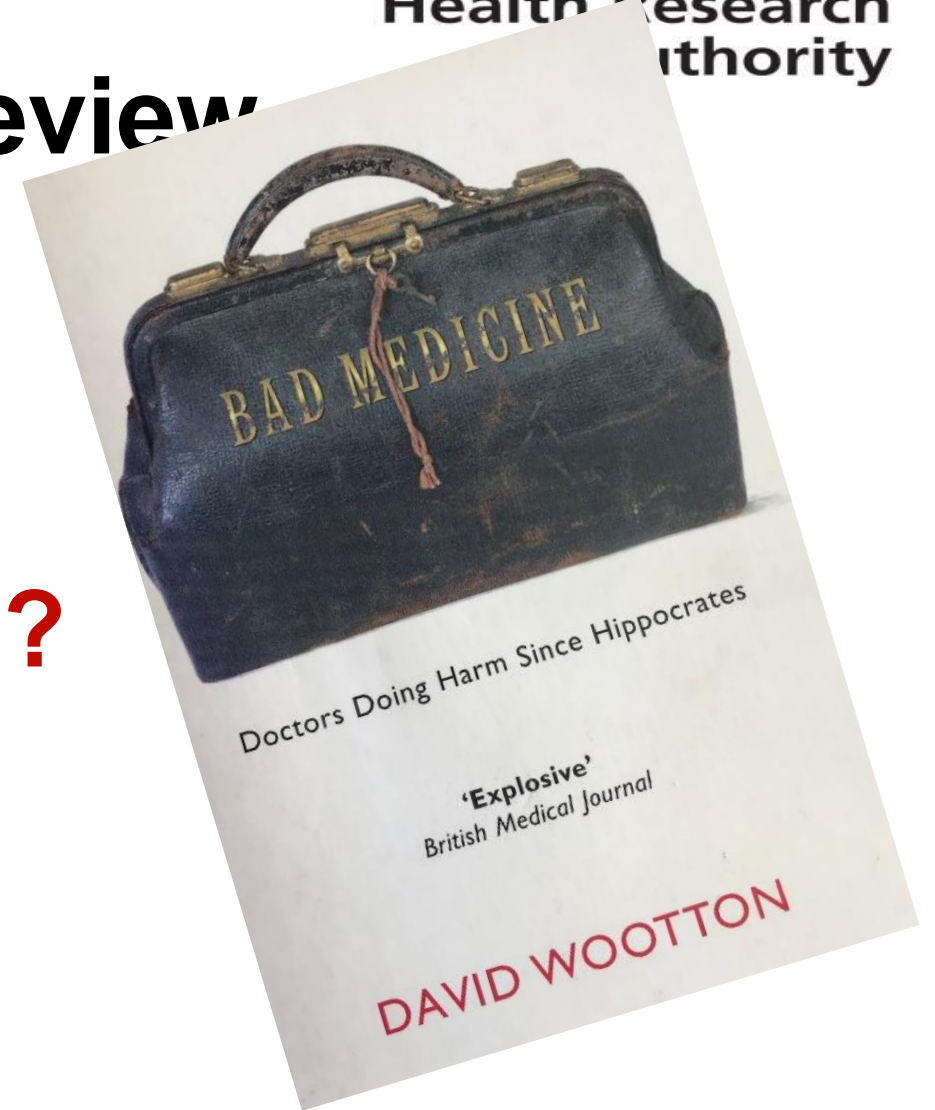12. Working with others beyond the committee.

A script is available here

Not, we hope, as arduous as those of <u>Hercules</u> or <u>Asterix</u>!

Ensuring REC members understand the purpose of review

Why do we meet?

BAD MEDICINE

Doctors Doing Harm Since Hippocrates

'Explosive'
British Medical Journal

DAVID WOOTTON

Ensuring REC members understand the purpose of review

Review must <u>decide</u> whether a study meets scientific and ethical standards taking into consideration:-
- the interests of participants.
- the interests of patients and public.
- the interests of the researchers.

Robust review: building trust to promote research

Ensuring REC members understand the purpose of review
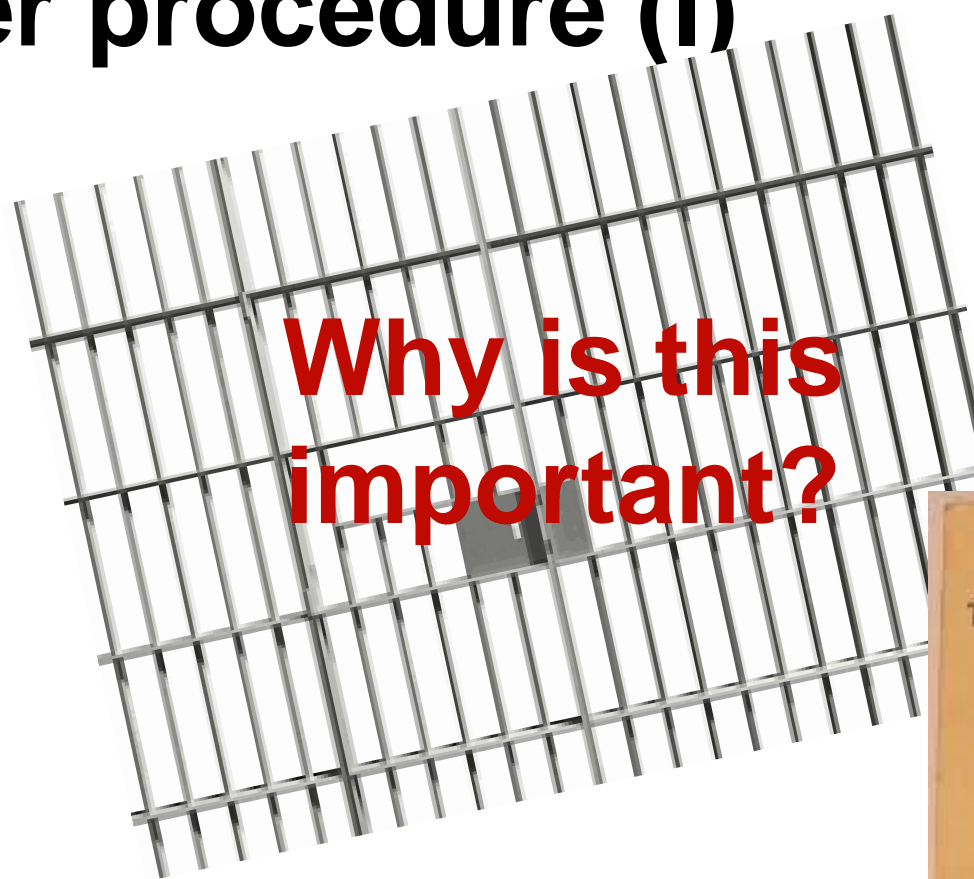
NHS
Health Research Authority

The Chair's role?

To help the committee

- understand the role and place of REC review.

- work out the purpose and value of this research in care.

- identify all with fair interest in the study.

- to establish these interests and accommodate them in review.

Ensuring the committee follows proper procedure (I)

Why is this important?

GAFREC

means

Governance Arrangements for Research Ethics Committees

Ensuring the committee follows proper procedure (II)

UK research review timelines
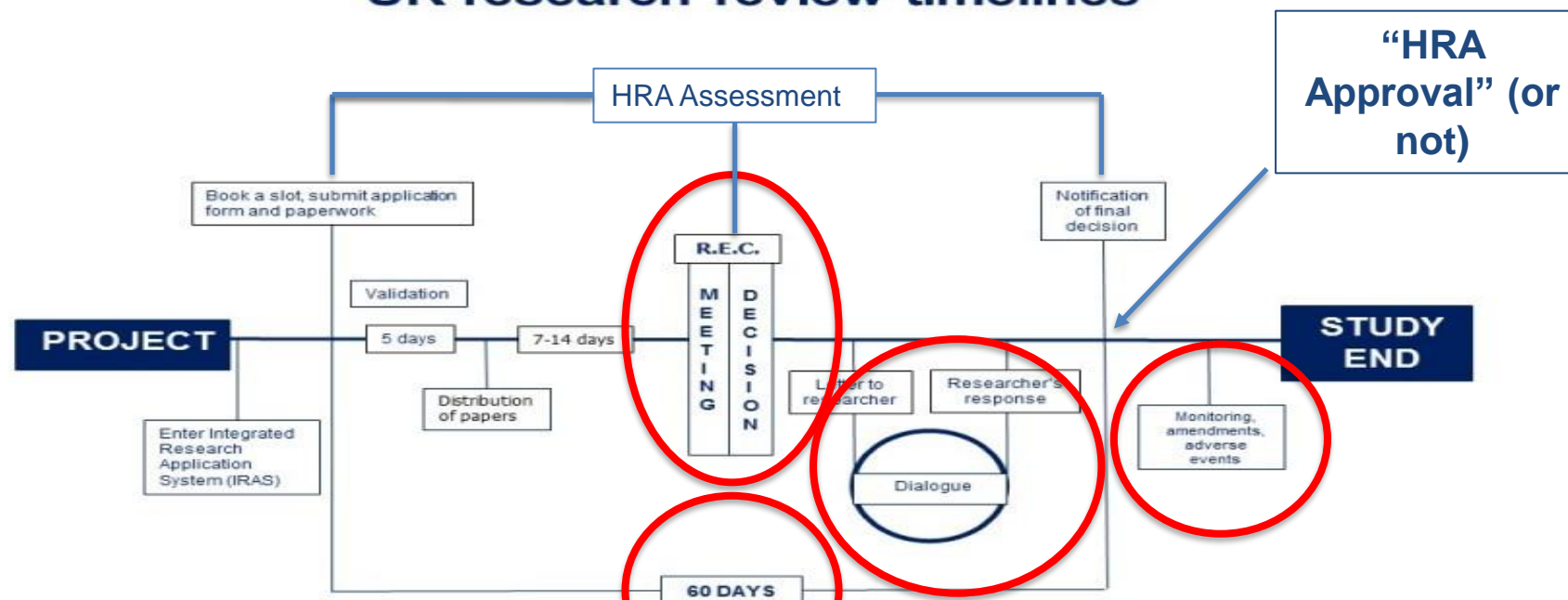
Some studies with "No Material Ethical Issues" may undergo a slightly different process that we call "proportionate view". New members will not be asked to undertake this.

http://www.reviewingresearch.com/review-timelines-for-committees-in-the-u-k/

Ensuring members understand purpose and procedure (III)

The Chair's role?

To:-

- Contribute to ensuring the REC follows GAfREC and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).
- Oversee honest, respectful, inclusive and open debate.
- Bring all to a decision.
- Oversee minutes of the meeting.
- Correspond with the applicant.

Considerations and reflection (I)

NHS Health Research Authority

In this webinar we've looked into how REC chairs can help members understand the purpose of review and follow appropriate procedure.

Three key points for chairs

- Review must accommodate and balance many different perspectives beyond the participants.

- The chair has an important role in overseeing fair debate.

- We need to be aware of and meet our timelines.

Considerations and reflection (II)

Further resources

1. [Governance Arrangements for Research Ethics Committees (UK)](#)
2. [Research Ethics Committees Standard Operating Procedures](#)
3. David Wootton's Bad Medicine. Oxford University Press
4. [The twelve labours of Hercules](#)
5. [The twelve tasks of Asterix](#)
6. [Reviewing Research](#)

The 12 tasks of a REC chair

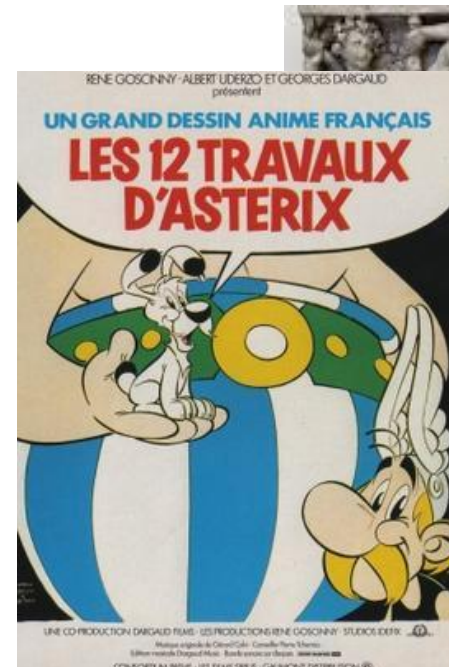# A series of Health Research Authority short webinars

Paul Gapper and Hugh Davies

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Helping members deliberate on applications

Dealing with nerves (Nerves are good for you)

- Acknowledging your experience
- Prepare
- Use relaxation techniques
- Motivational thoughts

- Confidence is earned

https://www.atlassian.com/blog/teamwork/how-to-run-effective-meetings

- Process Director: upholds the rules
- Administrator: keeps a record
- Task leader: getting through the agenda
- Participant: contributing ideas
- Chair

Helping members deliberate on applications

Styles of leadership

- Dictator
- Director
- Democrat
- Do anything

https://www.atlassian.com/blog/teamwork/how-to-run-effective-meetings

- Keep control of the agenda
- Remind the group of ground rules
- Use open/closed questions
- Idea not person
- Be alert for hidden agendas
- Simplify over-complex questions/statements

- Reward contributions
- Use names
- Reflect back
- Name the task
- Keep to time
- Look out for Any Other Business

Helping members deliberate on applications

1. Clear purpose

2. Keep attendees engaged

3. Make safe space for divergent thinking

4. Produce real, shareable results

https://www.atlassian.com/blog/teamwork/how-to-run-effective-meetings

Helping members deliberate on applications

Time management
- open and closed questions
- Put responsibility back to committee
- Take breaks
- Summarise
- Long-winded contributions
- Discuss time-keeping with committee

- Make the agenda visible
- Calculate the average time for discussion
- Start and finish on time
- Limit the number of speakers
- Back on track questions
- Estimate length of items and re-order

https://www.atlassian.com/blog/teamwork/how-to-run-effective-meetings

Working with applicants attending the committee

Their baby
Its not us vs them
Guest
Structure dialogue
Keep under control
Issue not No ad hominem

Considerations and reflection (I)

In this webinar we've looked into how REC chairs can help members.

Three key points for chairs

- Review

Considerations and reflection

What now? Some ideas:-

- Discuss our

Further resources

The 12 tasks of a REC chair

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This presentation is designed to provide general information only. Our website terms and conditions apply www.hra.nhs.uk
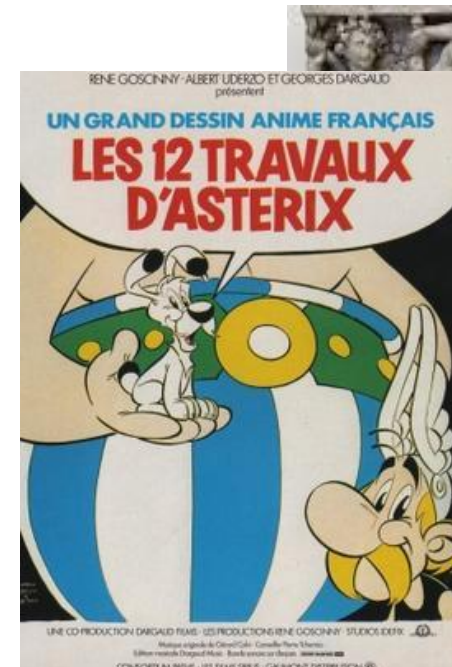
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Helping members make good decisions

What does a "good decision"
look like?

It may not be the right one…

It's the best one we could
make at the time. It was...

- Considered
- Conscientious
- Inclusive
- Founded on reasons
- Transparent in its development
- Open to review

Helping members make good decisions

How do we get there?

- Give time to reviewing the study.

- Engage in debate.

- Listen to all others.

- Build on reasons

- Have a methodical, transparent and shared approach…..

Helping members make good decisions

Having a methodical approach:-

- What follows is a personal approach that I hope might help you and your committee build your own.

Please take it with a pinch of salt!

Helping members make good decisions

Five steps that I'll go through one by one.

STEP 1: Getting a "picture" of the proposal

STEP 2: Analysing the study (deeper reading)

STEP 3: Spotting "issues of concern"

STEP 4: Analysing these issues

STEP 5: Reaching a shared decision

Helping members make good decisions

Step 1: Getting a "picture" of the proposal

The crucial first step. This puts the study in context, outlines "the fact matter", makes later can highlight like

The comparator(s)

title, A6(1), the PIS or the summary in the protocol

Factual errors very easily lead to errors (and unnecessary argument).

Helping members make good decisions

Step 2: Analysing the study, four possible frameworks to explore a study:-

1. The (extended) acronym I.P.O.C.C.C. (adding Consent and Confidentiality)

2. U.K. H.R.A. lead reviewer form

3. Integrated Research Application System

4. Principles of Good Research

Helping members make good decisions

Step 3: Identifying issues of concern. Three possible strategies:-

"*It doesn't look right!*

"*I'm surprised!*"

"*I wouldn't be happy.*"

"*It's not what I'd do.*"

"*It doesn't make sense.*"

"*It's not necessary.*"

"*It doesn't meet my picture of fair (consent etc).*"

"*It contravenes ethical principles I know.*"

"*Others wouldn't like this.*"

"*It conflicts with positions we have previously held.*"

"*It contradicts guidance I've read.*"

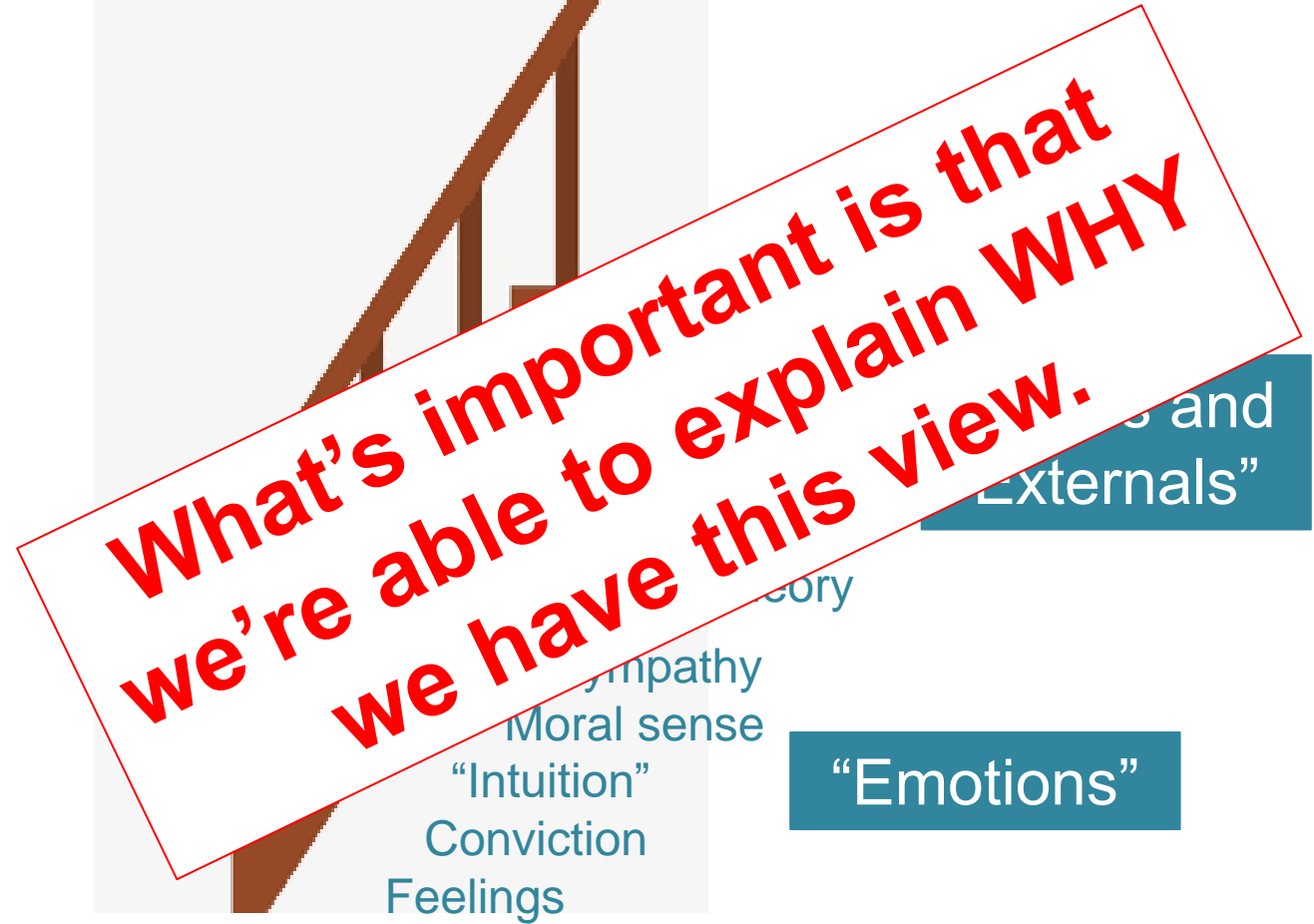from "beginning to for further analysis.

y issues early on "with questions in

e frameworks, into "research

Helping members make good decisions

Step 4: Analysing these "issues of concern".
On what should we build our views?

...s and
...Externals"

...eory

...mpathy

Moral sense

"Intuition"

Conviction

Feelings

"Emotions"

What's important is that we're able to explain WHY we have this view.

Helping members make good decisions

Step 5: Reaching a shared decision

If we agree: the decision is likely made.

The provisional opinion

and if we can't?

This is discussed in the webinar "Handling differences"

Helping REC members make good decisions

The Chair's role?

To ensure:-

- honest, respectful, inclusive and open debate.
- that deliberative methods and reasons are apparent and open.
- the committee reaches an agreed recognised decision.
- fair follow up accommodating committee concerns.

Considerations and reflection (I)

In this webinar we've looked into how REC chairs can help members make good decisions.

Three key points for chairs

- Ensure the committee have an accurate shared picture of the study.

- Oversee the deliberation and ensure debate is inclusive and respectful.

- Ensure reasons for any position are elucidated.

Considerations and reflection (II)

What now? Some ideas:-

- Discuss how members review and come to their own decisions as an agenda item.
- Draw up ideas on how the committee **should** deliberate together!

Further resources

1. Claire Foster The ethics of medical research on humans
2. Royal College of Physicians [Guidelines on the practice of ethics committees in medical research with human participants](#)
3. [Reviewing Research](#)
4. Simon Blackburn Ruling Passions

Helping members make good decisions

WEBINAR FOUR

The 12 tasks of a REC chair

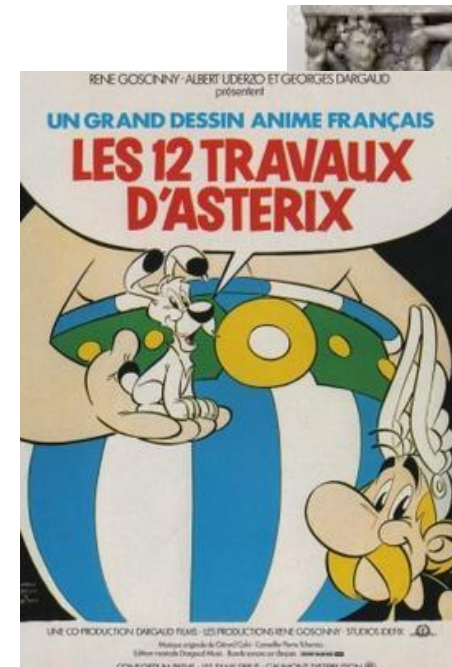# A series of Health Research Authority short webinars

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Not, we hope, as arduous as those of <u>Hercules</u> or <u>Asterix</u>!

Helping resolve disagreements

Don't be frightened of differences: they can be fun and a great way to learn!

But stick to the issue and stay cool

DON'T PANIC

Some ideas to start with…

Helping resolve disagreements

NHS
Health Research Authority

Behaving ourselves

- **Empathy** – to consider all involved
- **Clarity of thought** – to identify and work out ethical problems
- **Listening and respect** – to accommodate all others' opinions
- **Humility** – to weigh up arguments to make a decision or accommodate disagreement
- **Insight** – to reflect on your convictions and values

Misbehaving ourselves

- Argue without knowing the facts.
- Argue when it doesn't matter.
- Attack people personally.
- Dominate and impose our views on others.
- Criticize (in a hostile manner).
- Get angry.
- Display superiority.
- Throw our "expertise" about.

Helping resolve disagreements

A structured approach…

Helping resolve disagreements

- Ensure all have an accurate picture of the issue.
- Clarify issues so the difference is clear.
- If the disagreement will make no difference don't argue!
- Build on the "reasons" for different positions and weigh them up.
- Try to compromise.
- Ask if the minority can accept the committee's view.

Factual errors lead to ethical errors and needless argument.

Helping resolve disagreements

- Ensure all have an accurate picture of the issue.

- Clarify issues so the difference is clear.

- If the disagreement will make no difference don't argue!

- Build on the "reasons" for different positions and weigh them up.

- Try to compromise.

- Ask if the minority can accept the committee's view.

Is there REALLY a difference of views?

Helping resolve disagreements

- Ensure all have an accurate picture of the issue.
- Clarify issues so the difference is clear.

- If the disagreement will make no difference then don't argue!

- Build on the "reasons" for different positions and weigh them up.
- Try to compromise.
- Ask if the minority can accept the committee's view.

How often have you found yourself arguing and then wondered why?

Helping resolve disagreements

- Ensure all have an accurate picture of the issue.
- Clarify issues so the difference is clear.
- If the disagreement will make no difference don't argue!

- Build on the "reasons" for different positions and weigh them up.

- Try to compromise.
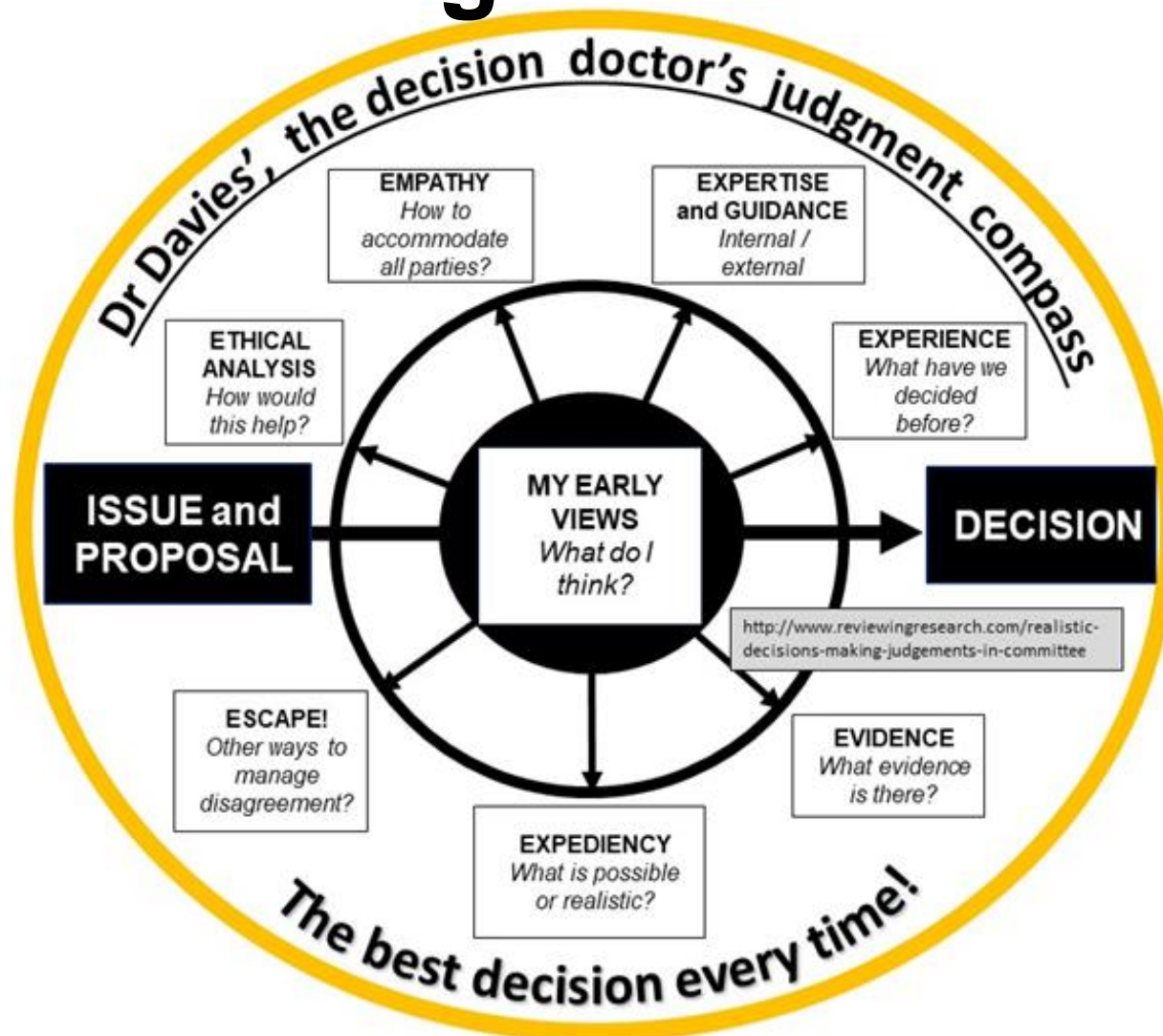- Ask if the minority can accept the committee's view.

Reasons must be the currency of our debate.

The next slide develops this; building on reasons and "referents"…

Helping resolve disagreements

Reasons and "external referents"

As an example:-
Is the use of placebo acceptable? Within committee there is disagreement….

Dr Davies', the decision doctor's judgment compass

EMPATHY
How to accommodate all parties?

EXPERTISE and GUIDANCE
Internal / external

ETHICAL ANALYSIS
How would this help?

EXPERIENCE
What have we decided before?

ISSUE and PROPOSAL

MY EARLY VIEWS
What do I think?

DECISION

http://www.reviewingresearch.com/realistic-decisions-making-judgements-in-committee

ESCAPE!
Other ways to manage disagreement?

EVIDENCE
What evidence is there?

EXPEDIENCY
What is possible or realistic?

The best decision every time!

Building decisions on:-

- Ethics
- Empathy
- Expertise
- Experience
- Evidence
- Expediency
- Escape!

Helping resolve disagreements

Weighing up the authority of reasons using

- breadth of consultation (views considered).
- material considered.
- method of assimilating all these.
- experience and background.
- expertise.
- the depth of their interest

or a ladder of "evidential weight" as on the next slide……

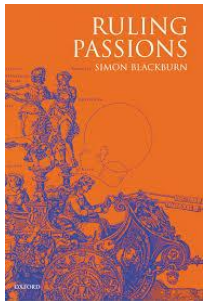# Helping resolve disagreements

A ladder of evidential weight

...se
...perience
Empathy
Ethical theory
Sympathy
Moral sense
"Intuition"
Conviction
Feelings

"Ethics and Externals"

"Emotions"

What's important is that we're able to explain WHY we have this view.

Helping resolve disagreements

- Ensure all have an accurate picture of the issue.
- Clarify issues so the difference is clear.
- If the disagreement will make no difference don't argue!
- Build on the "reasons" for different positions and weigh them up.

- Try to compromise.
- Ask if the minority can accept the committee's view.

If we agree: the decision is likely made.
If we disagree: we need to go further, postponing the decision (if allowed) or taking a vote.

Follow up:
- talk to the minority.
- have a later feedback/learning agenda item.
- think how this disagreement can be avoided in the future.

Helping resolve disagreements

The Chair's role?

To ensure:-

- honest, respectful, inclusive and open debate, keeping personality out of it.

- that deliberative methods and reasons are apparent and open.

- minority views are respected.

- we all stay friends and learn.

Considerations and reflection (I)

In this webinar we've looked into how REC chairs can help resolve disagreements.

Three key points for chairs

- Keep personalities out of it.

- Reasons to the fore.

- Look after the minority so we all stay friends and learn.

Considerations and reflection (II)

NHS Health Research Authority

What now? Some ideas:-

- Discuss past differences in committee.
- Work out where things went well and share good practice (and where they didn't|).
- Develop a strategy to manage future disagreements.

Further resources

1. Reviewing Research - managing disagreements
2. Fishkin J. When the people speak: Oxford University Press, 2011. 29
3. Fishkin JS, Luskin RC. Experimenting with a democratic ideal: deliberative polling and public opinion. Acta Politica 2005;40:284–98.
4. Daniels N, Sabin J. The ethics of accountability in managed care reform. Health Aff 1998;17:50–64.

Helping members make good decisions

Phew! The end!

Very happy to (try to) answer questions.
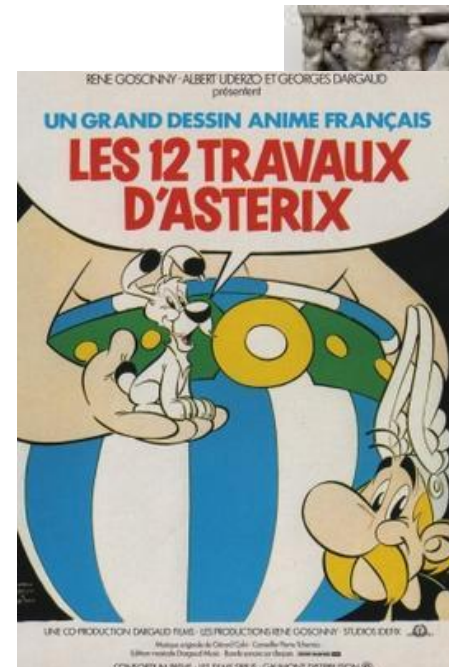
THANK YOU!

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Helping REC members

The chair can help by

- ensuring a fair workload
- managing behaviour and relationships
- retention: developing members' interests
- Organising and suggesting training
- recruiting to the committee
- receiving feedback

A pastoral role

Sub-committee work

The chair can help by

- ensuring a fair workload
- managing behaviour and relationships
- retention: developing members' interests
- Organising and suggesting training
- recruiting to the committee
- receiving feedback

A pastoral role

Working with the secretary/manager

Will be quite personal – some general ideas

- Both need a clear definition of roles magistrate and clerk of the court   respect

- Meeting in between time

- Both need a willingness to help AND be helped

- Arrange transitional planning when a chair takes over

- invest time early on working out how coordinator and chair can best work together

- provide timelines on communication

The twelve tasks of a REC chair

The Chair's role?

To ensure:-

- friends and learn.

Considerations and reflection

In this webinar I've talked about how REC chairs can

What now? What ideas do you have?

Developing your ideas

- Discuss in committee how you argue!
- Share good practice

Considerations and reflection

Further resources

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WEBINAR SIX

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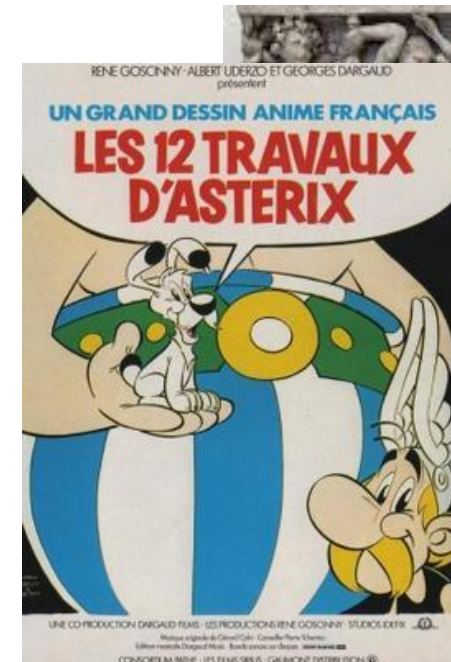
Working with applicants outside the committee

Shaered agenda
NO collusion
Document it
Ask advice for procedure

Working with other RECs and reviewers.

We are one public face of HRA

Working with others beyond the committee.

We are one public face of HRA

Relationships with other bodies

As such we are the public face of NRES and HRA

Researchers
(of all types)

Funders

Health care commissioners

Professions

RESEARCH
ETHICS

Patients

Health care providers

Regulators

Public

The twelve tasks of a REC chair

The Chair's role?

To ensure:-

.

Considerations and reflection

In this webinar I've talked about how REC chairs can help their members resolve differences.

What now? What ideas do you have?

Developing your ideas

- Discuss in committee how you argue!
- Share good practice

Considerations and reflection

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