IMPORTANT NOTICE: Procedures for researchers during COVID-19 outbreak for research falling under the purview of the Faculty of Medicine IRB/REB

Given the COVID-19 outbreak and in consideration of the importance of preserving the health and safety of the population, including research participants and McGill members, and following government and University directives, all on campus research or any in-person interactions with research participants is to be discontinued or postponed.

In many cases, in person participant data collection can be replaced with telephone or virtual communications such as Zoom and Skype. If researchers need to make immediate changes to their research method to conduct the data collection by phone or other virtual communication in order to eliminate risks related to the COVID-19 outbreak, then these changes can be implemented without IRB approval, under the following conditions:

- There is no increase in level of risk to participants;
- Privacy and confidentiality of participants is maintained;
- Consent is obtained and documented;
- Allowance is made for participants to agree, decline or withdraw further participation;
- The changes requested are temporary until such time as the University restrictions to conduct in-person participant interactions have been lifted.

The changes may be implemented immediately but must be reported to the Faculty of Medicine IRB/REB within 10 working days using the Protocol Deviation Form and adding COVID-19 in the description section of the form and in the email subject line.

If the researcher wishes to continue with the change, or for additional changes proposed to the research, the regular amendment form must be submitted.

Requests for just-in-time research directly related to COVID-19 research will be prioritized. When submitting new studies or amendments or any inquiries that relate directly to COVID-19, please identify it as such in the subject line.

For all other submissions, please send electronically to submit2irb.med@mcgill.ca. No additional hard copies are required during this time and electronic signatures are also encouraged.

The IRB/REB Office will maintain regular services, to the best of their ability, remotely and/or virtually. Please note that there may be delays in responses and review times due to the high volume of requests.

As the current situation is continually evolving, these procedures may change. The information will be updated as needed.

Kindly send any questions to submit2irb.med@mcgill.ca or to the IRB/REB staff listed below:
Ilde Lepore (Ethics Officer) – ilde.lepore@mcgill.ca
Sacha Young (Ethics Review Administrator) – sacha.young@mcgill.ca (as of April 1 only)
Nancy Abate (Research Ethics Coordinator) – irbsec.med@mcgill.ca
For additional information, information please go to https://www.mcgill.ca/medresearch/ethics

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