

FERCAP @ 10

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The *Forum for Ethical Review Committees in the Asian & Western Pacific Region* (FERCAP) is now ten years old. FERCAP was formally established by a group of bioethicists, ethics committee (EC)/institutional review board (IRB) members, health researchers, and medical practitioners in Bangkok, Thailand on January 12, 2000 as a result of the realization that ethical health research in the Asia-Pacific region requires collective wisdom and cooperation among various stakeholders (FERCAP, 2000). Since its founding, FERCAP has worked for capacity building in ethical health research in the region. Towards this goal, FERCAP spearheads major programs that include the following:

- *Annual International Conference*
- *Training Programs*
 - *Human Participant Protection Course (HPPC)*
 - *Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) Development Course*
 - *Surveying and Evaluating Ethical Review Practices Course*
 - *Various trainings in good clinical practice (GCP), health research ethics, and strategic quality management (SQM)*
- *Networking*
 - *Strategic Initiative for Developing Capacity in Ethical Review (SIDCER)*
 - *World Health Organization (WHO)/Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases (TDR)*

- *WHO South-East Asia Regional Office (SEARO)*
- *WHO Western Pacific Regional Office (WPRO)*
- *WHO-TDR Clinical Coordination and Training Center (CCTC)*
- *Various national, regional, and international institutions and organizations*

Together with its partners, FERCAP is also very much involved in the *SIDCER Recognition Program*, a global program that promotes good ethical review practices in health research among ECs/IRBs by implementing international criteria for surveying and evaluating ethical review practices (SIDCER, 2005; WHO/TDR, 2005).

In commemoration of a decade of capacity building in ethical health research in the region, FERCAP has put together this compilation of articles that highlight the forum's networking and partnership experiences during the last ten years. Vichai Chokevivat's contribution on "The FERCAP Story: A Decade of Fruitful Collaboration with Partners in Ethical Health Research" presents a brief history of FERCAP and an overview of the forum's main activities. In her essay "SIDCER @ 10," Juntra Karbwang-Laothavorn contextualizes the forum within the *Strategic Initiative for Developing Capacity in Ethical Review* (SIDCER), an independent public-private partnership initiative. Lisa Hamadian and Allan K. Johansen discuss the *SIDCER Recognition Program* in their paper "Reviewing Ethical Reviewers: The SIDCER/FERCAP Experience" while Atoy M. Navarro and Kesara Na-Bangchang narrate about the forum's engagements with its current home in their paper "At Home @ Thammasat University: The Case of FERCAP and WHO-TDR CCTC." Suggesting that the FERCAP network is not *just* an exchange of information and experience but a forum that incorporates a dimension of reciprocity unusual in contemporary organizations, Rachel Douglas-Jones imparts her reading of the forum in her contribution on "Fostering Common Goals and Sharing Values: Revisiting FERCAP's Regional Alliances." Cristina E. Torres' "Reflections on the FERCAP Experience: Moving Forward with Partnerships and Networks" provides a view of FERCAP from the EC/IRB grassroots and from within the forum. And finally,

Kenji Hirayama gives his thoughts on FERCAP's prospects for the future in his article "FERCAP Beyond 10."

All these commemorative essays showcase some of FERCAP's most important networking and partnerships forged during the last decade. By looking back at these productive networking and partnerships, the forum also looks forward to more years of capacity building in ethical health research in the Asia-Pacific region.

References

Forum for Ethical Review Committees in the Asian & Western Pacific Region (FERCAP) (2000). *Terms of reference*. Bangkok: FERCAP.

Strategic Initiative for Developing Capacity in Ethical Review (SIDCER) (2005). *The SIDCER recognition program*. Geneva: SIDCER.

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