

# **The 2024 Declaration of Helsinki: Taking Forward Bioethics and Human Rights**

Co-organized by: The Brazilian Society of Bioethics;  
International Federation of Associations of Pharmaceutical Physicians and  
Pharmaceutical Medicine (IFAPP);  
August 5 and 26. 2023

## Overview of the revision process of the 2024 Declaration of Helsinki: Part 1- focusing on placebo study

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# Conflict of interest disclosure

- The speaker has nothing to declare on COI with this presentation.
- I am one of the member of the Japan Association for Bioethics as well as an associate member of the World Medical Association.
- I am not at a specific position in the process of the revision of the DoH.
- This presentation expresses my concern on the coming revision of DoH from the viewpoint of an online observer of the thorough revision process.

# WMA Regional Meetings

(video-recordings available at URLs)

- December 9 – 11, 2022 Tel Aviv, Israel: **General** discussion
- February 24 – 25, 2023 Sao Paulo, Brazil: **Placebo**
- September 21 – 22, 2023 in Copenhagen, Denmark: **New clinical trial design**
- 30 November – 1 December 2023 in Tokyo, Japan: **Disaster** settings
- Jan 18, 19, 2024 Vatican City: Research in **resource-poor** settings

<https://www.wma.net/events-post/wma-conference-on-the-revision-of-the-declaration-of-helsinki-research-in-resource-poor-settings/>

## **Phase 1 Public Consultation: 13 January – 7 February**

- Feb 18, 19, 2024 Johannesburg: **Vulnerability**

<https://www.wma.net/events-post/wma-regional-meeting-in-africa-on-the-revision-of-the-declaration-of-helsinki/>

- May 14, 15, 2024 Munich, Germany: Research with **vulnerable** people

<https://www.wma.net/events-post/research-with-vulnerable-people-a-targeted-interdisciplinary-discussion-within-the-scope-of-the-wma-declaration-of-helsinki-revision/>

## **Phase 2 Public Consultation: 3 – 24 June**

- August 15-16, 2024 Washington DC, US: **Advocacy and Communication**

<https://www.wma.net/events-post/wma-declaration-of-helsinki-revision-advocacy-and-communication/>

- October 16-19, 2024 Helsinki, Finland, WMA General Assembly: **Adoption**

## Phase 1 public consultation:

Submitted co-authoring with Prof. Dirceu Greco

### Public Comment Template

#### General Public Comments:

##### Authors of comment:

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## Phase 2 public consultation:

Submitted co-authoring with Prof. Dirceu Greco and Prof. Elda Bussinguer, the past and current Brazilian Society of Bioethics

#### Declaration of Helsinki Public Comment Period Two

←

##### COMMENTING ORGANIZATION (if applicable): ←

Takeo Saio, Associate Member of the WMA does not represent his affiliated organization, and these comments were made in collaboration with Dirceu Greco, Associate Member of the WMA and with Elda Bussinguer, representing the Brazilian Society of Bioethics ←

←

##### COMMENT PREPARER (name and title): ←

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# Paragraph 33 Conditions of placebo study

## **Most controversial**

When there is an intervention proven to be effective/safe  
On what condition, placebo study can be permitted?

### **DoH (1964 first ver.) 1975-2000**

Physician should provide  
**best-proven in the world**  
even in comparative study

**Goal of research never precedent to patient interest/benefit ( § 8 ) :**

- **Declaration of Geneva**
- **International Code of Medical Ethics**

### **ICH E10 2000**

**No additional risk of serious or irreversible harm**

### **DoH 2002 (small group decision- overruled 2000 GA decision)- now: 2013, 2024 draft**

When proven intervention exists,  
placebo can be permitted when  
**no additional risk of serious or  
irreversible harm**

CIOMS 2002, before 2016 revision

### **CIOMS 2016**

When proven intervention exists,  
placebo can be permitted when  
**minor increase above  
minimal risk**



# WMA's explanation

in public consultation document

Deceptive?

Unfair?

Out of the focus of controversy

- Standard of care (local or global)
- Risk threshold (DoH or CIOMS)

## Paragraph 33

The workgroup undertook **an in-depth review following the Latin American Regional Meeting with attendees from 10 Latin American countries and representatives from Confederación Médica Latinoamericana y del Caribe (CONFEMEL) and the Pan American Health Organization**. The workgroup proposed in public comment period one to clarify that the first exception when there is “**no proven intervention**” means a “**safe and effective**” intervention. The workgroup also clarified that there can sometimes be more than one proven intervention with similar efficacy and safety.

**Based on a suggestion from CONFEMEL**, the workgroup clarified that interventions can be considered inferior to the best proven one(s) not only because of low efficacy but also because of unacceptable side-effects or risk profiles.

At the urging of some public commenters including CONFEMEL members who raised concern about potential misinterpretation, the workgroup subsequently deleted the proposed addition of “**safe and effective**” to mitigate risk of abuse.

# Questions

- 2008 “Declaration of Cordoba”
- 2008 “Buenos Aires Declaration”
- 2013 “Declaration of Pachuca”

Latin American organizations rejected DoH because of weakened protection in placebo and access paragraphs.

Still effective...?

# JMA's view at the time of 2000 (not necessarily same views are kept)

Late Eitaka Tsuboi, President of JMA/WMA at the time of 2000 revision

- JMA did not accept the 2002 note of clarification to permit placebo study when there is a proven intervention if there is no additional risk of serious or irreversible harm.
- JMA did not publish a Japanese translation of 2002 note at website.
- Japan objected to proposal from AMA because developing countries were not in a position to object because they benefited from the US, thereby expressing the non-Western spirit that ethical reason takes precedence over scientific rationale and pragmatism.
- This position was also defended at the 2000 GA by representatives of other medical.
- The placebo clause in the 2000 version is a perfect. prima facie norm.

Clin Eval 30 (1) 2002

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*Thank you for your attention!*

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analysis including experiences during the  
COVID-19 pandemic. In: *Ethical innovation for  
global health: pandemic, democracy and ethics  
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(Japanese translation)

[http://cont.o.oo7.jp/52\\_1/p133-59.pdf](http://cont.o.oo7.jp/52_1/p133-59.pdf)

Book and related webinar information

<http://cont.o.oo7.jp/sympo/eigh.html>

