



APACPH 2025 Pre-Conference Workshop

Theme : WHO's Work to Promote Research Ethics in the Western Pacific Region

Date : 04 November 2025

Venue : Mae Fah Luang University, Chiang Rai, Thailand

Hosts : Asian Institute for Bioethics and Health Law (AIBHL), Yonsei University

Session Overview

The APACPH 2025 Pre-Conference Workshop of the Asian Institute for Bioethics and Health Law (AIBHL) explores the efforts of the World Health Organization (WHO) in enhancing ethical standards and governance in health research across the Western Pacific Region. With a focus on both regional strategy and country-specific challenges, the session highlights WHO's work in promoting ethical, responsible, and locally relevant research practices. Special attention will be given to strengthening research ethics governance in Pacific Island Countries (PICs), where infrastructure and capacity constraints remain significant challenges.

Session Objectives

1. Ethics in international research for health : Work of WHO in the Western Pacific

This theme presents WHO's multi-faceted strategy to scale up science, research, and innovation capacity by:

- Strengthening the research ecosystem and evidence-based policymaking,
- Embedding ethics, responsibility, and accountability in health research,
- Building innovation ecosystems to support transformative solutions.

Key initiatives include the *Selangor Consensus*, which promotes equitable clinical trials by:

- Centering equity in trial design and implementation,
- Fostering local capacity and international partnerships,
- Integrating trials into public health systems,
- Enhancing data governance through registries.

Additionally, WHO emphasizes ethical, legal, and social implications (ELSI) of emerging fields like human genomics and AI, advocating for locally aligned, trust-based, and multisectoral approaches to innovation.

2. Strengthening Research Ethics Governance in Pacific Island Countries (PICs) (Tentative)

This theme focuses on the unique ethical challenges and governance needs of PICs, illustrated by the Oceanian Genome Variation Project (OGVP). Though the OGVP aimed to advance population health by collecting over 10,000 blood samples, concerns emerged regarding:

- Informed consent processes,
- Lack of local REC and Ministry of Health engagement,
- Oversight of secondary uses.

The case highlights the need for:

- Stronger local ethics governance and benefit-sharing frameworks,
- Enhanced dialogue on data sovereignty and community engagement,
- Forward-looking mechanisms to manage the ethical implications of large-scale genomic, biobanking, and digital health research in the region.

Program Agenda

Time	Program	Speaker
10 minutes	Opening Remarks	So Yoon Kim
5 minutes	Group Photo	
10 minutes	Break Time	
40 minutes	Strengthening Research Ethics Governance in Pacific Island Countries (PICs) (Tentative)	Hannah Kim (online zoom)
35 minutes	Discussion	So Yoon Kim
		Sharon Perello Malasig
20 minutes	Panel Discussion & Q&A	
10 minutes	Closing Remarks	So Yoon Kim

Session Chair/Moderator

- AHN, Myoung Ock
- So Yoon Kim