Evaluation of ethical issues in collaborative studies

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Reasons for collaborative studies

• Scientific interest – some subjects have to be studied together (e.g. rare cases) or in a special place (e.g. impact of climate)

• Social interest – to build networks which may start as joint studies and grow into personal and institutional partnership

• Personal or political interest – some studies are built on existing friendships or policies
Factors increasing likelihood of successful collaboration

• Personal "chemistry" of the investigators
• Presence of the coordinator
• Scarcity of resources
• Presence of local enemies
• Frequent contacts/meetings of investigators
• Exotic locations
• Involvement of "significant others"
Ethical rules of collaboration

Rules 1 – 4

• Goals of collaboration must be set jointly by all the investigators
• The pace of collaboration has to be set thinking about the slowest participant
• Collaboration must not exhaust any partner
• The interpretation of the results must be based on the consensus of all participants

Norman Sartorius, Shanghai 2011
Ethical rules of collaboration
Rules 5 - 7

• The ruling of the Ethical review committee in the strictest centre should be applied in all centres

• The first publication of the project should present the total set of results (in agreement with all investigators and signed by all of them).

• The use of data should be discussed before data collection starts and recorded in an agreement signed by all.
Ethical rules of collaboration
Rules 8 - 10

• The collaboration should contribute to the positive image of the centres and of their countries' research and service

• The collaboration should leave useful traces behind it (e.g. staff trained in particular research methods)

• Collaboration should serve as a bridge for learning about the centres and their countries