**Announcement and instruction to all researchers**

**from the Faculty of Health Sciences Research Ethics Committee**

This is an update following previous instructions from the Research Ethics Committee, accounting for recent announcements by government in relation to COVID-19 on 24 May 2020.

All researchers must minimise the risk of transmission at research sites and in studies involving human participants approved by the Research Ethics Committee. To this end,

1. all non-therapeutic or non-interventional research data gathering involving contact with human participants remain suspended, with the exception of studies involving telephonic or other online/remote methods of data collection;
2. research that is entirely situated in a laboratory is permitted provided that COVID-19 precautionary measures are in place;
3. research that is merely utilising existing records or data is permitted provided that COVID-19 precautionary measures are in place
4. emergency research related to COVID-19 is permitted after ethics approval;
5. everyone should endeavour protecting research participants, personnel and students in reducing the risk of transmission of COVID-19.

**For therapeutic and clinical research trials:**

1. each research study or study site must maintain a plan to minimise exposure to COVID-19 risk for all parties involved in the study, including but not limited to research participants, researchers and student researchers;
2. Whenever feasible, in-person visits should be substituted with telephonic visits;
3. Principal investigators and study sites should maintain measures to ensure that there is no interruption of required medication/essential treatment and monitoring of adverse events;
4. Researchers and study sites should develop a ‘COVID-19’ template register in case retrospective contact tracing becomes necessary;
5. New enrolments into clinical trials remain suspended. Potential exceptions to this announcement should be discussed with the chair or a deputy chair of the REC;
6. Serious adverse events at an UP-site should be reported on the PeopleSoft system within 72 hours as usual.