

CHICKEN SOUP FOR THE BUSY COORDINATOR

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HOW TO SET UP A TISSUE BANK?

Scenario:

Dr Lim is the Principal Investigator of a HBR liver cancer study (LCS-1) in NHG. Participants whom have agreed and consented to the study will have their liver samples collected from the resected tumor after surgery; and additional samples will be stored for future studies.

The LCS1 is now completed and Dr Lim intends to store all the additional samples for his own future studies as well as other colleagues' studies related to liver cancer. Since Dr Lim had decided to store and provide these samples, he is considered to be conducting tissue banking activities. Therefore his study coordinator informed him that he is required to comply with the HBRA – Human Tissue Framework (as it was effective 1 November 2019) as well as the [NHG Policy for Tissue Banks](#). She shared the following definitions with him.

A. Tissue Bank is defined as an individual or a body of persons, whether corporate or unincorporate, or other organisation, that carries on or conducts any tissue banking activity but excludes an individual, a body or persons or an organisation that conducts any tissue banking activity solely for the purposes of the person's or organisation's own human biomedical research approved or exempted from review by an institutional review board.

B. Tissue Banking Activities means a structured and an organised activity involving human tissue for the purposes of facilitating current or future research or for public health or epidemiological purposes or any combination of such purposes including any of the following activities:

- a) the collection, storage, procurement or importation of human tissue;
- b) the supply, provision or export of human tissue.

For studies approved from 1 November 2019 involving tissue banking activities under the HBRA Human Tissue Framework; NHG custodians should submit a Tissue Bank Application to the NHG Tissue Compliance Committee for approval before conducting any tissue banking activities.

What should Dr Lim do?

Dr Lim will be required to complete the [NHG HBRA – Human Tissue Framework Course](#) to be equipped with knowledge on the Human Biomedical Research (Tissue Banking) Regulations and institutional policies to ensure proper management of his Human Tissue Bank. Next, he should submit a Tissue Bank Application for the setting up of his tissue bank in NHG. His study coordinator shared the following steps with him ([NHG Tissue Compliance Circular 02/2019](#)):

Step 1: Identify a custodian. In this case, Dr Lim may be the custodian and he is responsible for complying with the [HBRA Human Tissue Regulations and NHG Policies](#).

Step 2: Download and complete the [Tissue Bank Application Form](#)

Step 3: Seek endorsement from his department representative and [Institutional Tissue Bank Committee](#)

Step 4: Submit the completed form to the NHG Tissue Committee Secretariat via NHGTCSecretariat@nhg.com.sg

REMINDER: All NHG Staff who are intending to become a Tissue Bank, are required to be familiarized with the NHG Policy for Tissue Banks. Readers are advised to comply with their institutional policies on the requirements of tissue banking activities and/ or the setting up of a tissue bank.

References:

- [Human Biomedical Research Act 2015 \(Act 29 of 2015\), Human Biomedical Research \(Tissue Banking\) Regulations 2019](#)
- [Human Biomedical Research Act 2015, Human Biomedical Research \(Amendment\) Regulations 2019](#)
- [NHG Policy for Tissue Banks](#)
- [NHG Tissue Compliance Circulars](#)

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**Disclaimer: All characters appearing in this article are fictitious. Any resemblance to real persons is purely coincidental. Best practices may differ between institutions. Readers are encouraged to follow their institution's policies/guidelines relating to the above scenarios/case study.*