Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists
SURVEY RESEARCH POLICY

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Survey Research Policy is to provide guidance to ANZCA Fellows and trainees, and their research collaborators, regarding the standards of survey research expected by ANZCA.

2. INTRODUCTION

ANZCA facilitated survey research must be soundly designed, promote safe and high quality patient care, respect the privacy and confidentiality of participants and avoid burdening Fellows and trainees unnecessarily.

ANZCA encourages the distribution of surveys to support research activities that are of publishable standard. Despite the widespread perception that surveys are easy to conduct, good survey research requires substantial planning, time and effort. Attention should be paid to rigorous survey design, careful implementation and robust data collection and analysis. A poorly conducted survey can lead to misleading or invalid conclusions, undermine confidence in survey research and affect participation by the target population in future surveys.

ANZCA requires that the privacy of participants and their confidential information is respected. The College does not provide the contact details of its Fellows and trainees directly to survey researchers. In line with concerns about burdening Fellows and trainees, the College avoids sending individual Fellows or trainees excessive numbers of surveys or sending poorly targeted surveys.

The ANZCA survey research process is overseen by the ANZCA Clinical Trials Network (CTN) Executive and Coordinator. The Executive reports to ANZCA Council via the Research Committee.

3. WHO DOES THIS POLICY APPLY TO?

This policy applies to ANZCA Fellows and trainees wishing to conduct survey research, including trainees who wish to conduct survey research in order to fulfil ANZCA’s training program requirements. Non-ANZCA members wishing to survey ANZCA Fellows and trainees via the ANZCA-facilitated process must conduct this research in collaboration with an ANZCA Fellow or trainee.

This policy also applies to survey research conducted by special interest groups (SIGs) or regional/national committees (RC/NC) that are exempted from CTN review by the SIG/RC/NC Chair (see Section 5.10).

4. WHO DOES THIS POLICY NOT APPLY TO?

This policy does not apply to the following activities:

- Satisfaction surveys at meetings, seminars and conferences.
• Satisfaction surveys of ANZCA staff.
• Satisfaction surveys of ANZCA Fellows and trainees.
• Qualitative research involving research activities such as focus groups, interviews, surveys with mostly open-ended questions or with small sample sizes.
• Any survey that is exempted by Council such as a workforce or curriculum survey.
5. **BODY OF POLICY**

5.1 **The role of the ANZCA CTN**

The primary aim of the ANZCA CTN is to support multicentre research trials. In addition, the CTN facilitates survey research for Fellows and trainees. This process involves reviewing survey research applications, assessing the scientific validity of surveys, providing advice to researchers, seeking evidence of ethics approval, protecting the privacy of ANZCA Fellows and trainees, and ensuring that they are not overburdened with surveys. The CTN may also assess whether it is feasible to proceed with the survey research, given the survey response rate anticipated, the resources required, the risks to the College, and the costs involved.

Individual researchers are responsible for collecting, analysing and reporting survey data, unless the survey is part of a CTN-sponsored research project. Individual researchers are also responsible for obtaining ethical oversight for their research activity (see Section 5.3).

5.2 **Privacy**

ANZCA is committed to ensuring the privacy of individuals in accordance with:

- National Privacy Principles – Australian Privacy Act 1988, Privacy Amendment (Enhancing Privacy Protection) Act 2012
- Information Privacy Principles – New Zealand Privacy Act 1993
- ANZCA Privacy Policy

The ANZCA privacy policy outlines how the College collects, uses and discloses personal information and the procedures that allow access to this information. The College cannot disclose personal information about its members. This includes email addresses and contact details for the purposes of research. The College can, however, facilitate survey distribution on behalf of a Fellow or trainee, in which personal information from the College database is only known to the CTN Coordinator.

When using an electronic survey tool such as SurveyMonkey®, researchers must choose the option to not collect IP addresses. This action must be clearly acknowledged in the application form, to the Australian Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) or New Zealand Health and Disability Ethics Committee (HDEC) and in the invitation to participate that is issued with the email distribution to recipients.

5.3 **Ethical oversight**

Evidence of ethical oversight from the appropriate body in each of the countries where the investigators reside is required before the CTN will facilitate distribution (e.g. ethics approval from HREC and/or HDEC, or documentation stating that ethical review is not required). The CTN can provide advice about this process.

In most cases, where the survey is anonymous, voluntary and data is kept confidential, the research activity is considered “low or negligible risk”, and does not require full review by an ethics committee. However, where a survey includes sensitive questions that may cause harm or distress to a participant, for example a survey that examines the welfare of anaesthetists, the CTN may request that the survey undergoes a full HREC/ HDEC review.
5.4 Trainee research

The CTN encourages trainees to undertake survey research during their training. Evidence of approval from an appropriate College-appointed supervisor must be provided.

5.5 Scientific rigour and publication

The CTN will not facilitate an unscientific or poorly constructed survey. It will not facilitate a survey where the aims of the research activity are unclear. Surveys must be of a publishable standard, and it is expected that the researcher will devote adequate time to investigating their area of interest and design a survey that is well thought out, clearly written and scientifically rigorous.

5.6 Sample size

The CTN does not send surveys to the entire Fellowship, unless the researcher presents a strong case for why this is scientifically necessary. Instead, the survey will be distributed to a sample of Fellows, trainees or both, carefully selected to optimise the response rate. The aim is to balance the need to obtain scientific valid data with avoiding sending excessive numbers of surveys to Fellows and trainees.

5.7 Piloting the survey

Surveys must be piloted with colleagues, prior to submission to the CTN. If using an electronic survey method, a working link to the survey must be included in the application form.

5.8 The application and review process

Applicants are required to contact the CTN coordinator to discuss their survey research idea before submitting the application.

The Survey Research Application Form includes details of the application and review process and is submitted to the CTN coordinator after the initial discussion.

Following review feedback to investigators is provided via the CTN coordinator, although in some instances it may be necessary to resolve issues via direct communication between the investigator and the reviewer.

The CTN will not facilitate a poorly constructed or unscientific survey even if the survey has prior ANZCA Scholar Role activity approval and/or HREC/NZ-HDEC approval.

Where a survey asks sensitive questions that may cause harm or distress to a participant, for example a survey that examines the welfare of anaesthetists, the CTN may escalate the review process through the Research Committee chair to the ANZCA Council Executive. The Executive has the final discretion on whether the survey can proceed.

Any person who is dissatisfied with or adversely affected by a decision under this process has access to the ANZCA reconsideration, review and appeal processes. These policies can be found at http://www.anzca.edu.au/resources/regulations.

5.9 ANZCA website
The ANZCA website contains detailed information about survey research, including references and the survey research application form. Surveys that have been published or presented at scientific meetings will be listed at www.anzca.edu.au/fellows/Research/clinical-trials-network.html
5.10 Surveys within special interest groups (SIGs) and regional/national committees

Special interest groups (SIGs) were founded by ANZCA, the Australian Society of Anaesthetists and New Zealand Society of Anaesthetists to foster the continuing professional development of anaesthetists with sub-specialty interests. The three parent organisations have agreed that the process for approval of surveys will rest with the parent secretariat for the SIG. Therefore, the SIGs that have engaged ANZCA as their parent secretariat must undertake their research according to this policy. In particular, the executive of the SIG must ensure that HREC/ HDEC approval has been obtained. The CTN can assist where needed.

The Australian regional committees and New Zealand National Committee of ANZCA have access to email distribution lists for their own regions. Nevertheless, Fellows or trainees wishing to conduct a survey in one region must still undertake their research according to this policy. In particular the regional/national committee must ensure that HREC/ HDEC approval has been obtained. The CTN can assist where needed.

If the SIG or regional/national committee chooses not to seek CTN support, then the cover letter accompanying the survey must state that the survey has SIG executive or regional/national committee approval.

5.11 Costs

The College may levy fees for facilitating electronic surveys on behalf of Fellows. Surveys that are trainee projects to fulfil ANZCA’s training program requirements do not incur a fee. ANZCA no longer facilitates hard-copy surveys.

5.12 Acknowledgement of ANZCA CTN

All surveys that are facilitated by the CTN and are published or presented at a conference or meeting are required to acknowledge the ANZCA CTN.

5.13 Reporting to ANZCA CTN

When the project is complete, investigators are required to report their final response rate to the CTN coordinator. In addition, the investigators are required to report on any publications and research outputs of their survey.

6. CONCERNS OR COMMENTS

If there are any concerns or comments in regard to this policy, please contact the ANZCA CTN Coordinator ctn@anzca.edu.au. Resolution of concerns will be sought as soon as possible.

7. CHANGES TO THIS POLICY

The College may modify or amend this policy at any time. Formal notice of amendments is not ordinarily given, but this policy is available via the College website, www.anzca.edu.au, or by contacting the College on +61 3 9510 6299.
8. REFERENCES


9. CHANGE CONTROL REGISTER

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