

*ANNUAL REPORT*

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*2007*



TUTKIMUSEETTINEN NEUVOTTELUKUNTA  
FORSKNINGSETISKA DELEGATIONEN  
NATIONAL ADVISORY BOARD ON RESEARCH ETHICS



# MISSION OF THE NATIONAL ADVISORY BOARD ON RESEARCH ETHICS

The statutory tasks of the National Advisory Board on Research Ethics, which is appointed by the Ministry of Education, are:

- 1) To make proposals and issue statements to governmental authorities on legislative and other matters concerning research ethics;
- 2) To act as an expert body working towards the resolution of ethical issues relating to research;
- 3) To take initiative in advancing research ethics and to promote discussion concerning research ethics;
- 4) To follow international developments in the field and to take actively part in international cooperation; and
- 5) To inform the public about research ethics.

## COMPOSITION OF THE BOARD

The Ministry of Education has appointed the National Advisory Board on Research Ethics for a three-year period 1 February 2007 – 31 January 2010. The Chair of the Board in 2007 was Chancellor Eero Vuorio, University of Turku, and the Vice Chair was Vice-Rector Riitta Keiski, University of Oulu. The Advisory Board has eight members, who do not have personal deputies:

Professor Katie Eriksson (Åbo Akademi University)  
Director General Matti Heikkilä (National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health)  
Counsellor of Legislation Markku Helin (Ministry of Justice)  
Senior Technology Adviser Merja Hiltunen (National Technology Agency Tekes)  
Archivist Arja Kuula (University of Tampere)  
Director Paavo Löppönen (Academy of Finland)  
Vice-President Sinimaaria Ranki (EVTEK University of Applied Sciences)  
Professor Ari Salminen (University of Vaasa)

Adjunct Professor Salla Lötjönen continued as Secretary General from the beginning of September 2007; up till then she was substituted by Adjunct Professor FT Sari Löytökorpi. Johanna Nieminen acted as secretary both to the National Advisory Board on Research Ethics and to the Committee for Public Information until 16 November 2007. The offices of both of these bodies are attached to the Federation of Finnish Learned Societies at the House of the Estates, Hallituskatu 2 B, 00170 HELSINKI.

The Annual Report was adopted by the National Advisory Board on Research Ethics at its meeting on 11 December 2007.

Eero Vuorio  
The Chair

Salla Lötjönen  
Secretary General

# ACTIVITIES OF THE BOARD

## Preventive action and education

The National Advisory Board on Research Ethics worked actively to make its guidelines "Good scientific practice and procedures for handling misconduct and fraud in science" (2002) known. The information is especially targeted to graduate schools, the polytechnics not yet committed to the guidelines, and learned societies. The Advisory Board distributed over 1000 copies of the guidelines to these organisations. The guidelines have also been distributed at the House of Sciences and Letters, at the Tiedekirja bookshop, at seminars and at various research-related fairs.

New organisations which committed to following the guidelines in their activities through the signature of their directors in 2007 are HAMK University of Applied Sciences, the Finnish Society for Study of Infectious Diseases, Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences, Kemi-Tornio University of Applied Sciences, PIRAMK University of Applied Sciences, the Society for Social Medicine in Finland, the Finnish Society of Social Work Research, the Finnish Society for Cinema Studies, the Finnish Society for Aesthetics, the Pattern Recognition Society of Finland, the Finnish Oriental Society, the Finnish Folklore Society, the Finnish Cardiac Society, the Foundation of the Finnish Institute in the Middle East and Svenska yrkeshögskolan University of Applied Sciences. By the end of 2007 altogether 93 universities, research institutes, polytechnics and other research organisations had signed the guidelines.

As before, the Advisory Board received a large number of requests for education on topics relating to research ethics from universities, polytechnics and other research organisations. The Chair, members and the Secretary General contributed actively to these educational events (Appendix 1). Considering education a primary and vital priority, but lacking the resources to respond to all requests, the Board arranged two seminars during 2007. The programmes and papers read at the seminars can be accessed (in Finnish) at the Board's web site.

- Ethical questions in the humanities and social sciences, Thursday 22 March 2007: The seminar discussed the need for regulation,

preassessment and guidelines for humanities and social science research and presented different solution models for handling problems in practice. The papers read at the seminar are available in Finnish at <http://www.tenk.fi/ajankohtaista.htm>. There were 126 registered participants.

- Ethics of public information – research findings and open access, Thursday 3 May 2007: The seminar was arranged jointly with the Committee for Public Information to discuss questions relating to open research publication and science ethics from a multidisciplinary angle. The papers read at the seminar are available in Finnish at <http://www.tenk.fi/ajankohtaista.htm>. There were 97 registered participants, representing both the science community and science administration.

## Development of mechanisms for handling misconduct in research

In 2007 the National Advisory Board on Research Ethics was notified of three cases of violation of research ethics which had been handled, or were being handled, locally. Two of the alleged violations concerned unauthorised borrowing from a research and a dissertation and one the presentation of misleading research results to the public. In one of the cases of alleged plagiarism, the investigation found no plagiarism but did find the student guilty of misconduct in science in writing his/her master's thesis. The two other cases are still being handled.

The Board was requested to give its opinion on five locally resolved cases by parties unsatisfied with the procedure or the finding:

- Two alleged cases concerned plagiarism: in both the suspect was found guilty of poor reference practice, which is classified as misconduct in science, and no intentional fraud was found.
- One allegation concerned theft of a research plan: this involved a jointly submitted application for

financing, during which the parties had openly exchanged information. The National Advisory Board on Research Ethics agreed with the local view that no misconduct could be found.

- One allegation concerned intentional hindering and stalling of a researcher's work and unclarities in the payment of salary/fee: The Advisory Board was of the opinion that the delay in the publication of the co-authored manuscripts was not due to an intentional act but that the manuscripts did not fulfil the quality criteria set by the responsible organisation. The Board also saw that its mandate does not extend to recommending solutions to administrative disputes involving employment relations but found indications of double compensation and recommended that the practices be reviewed.
- One alleged case concerned the utilisation of a patented invention: the Advisory Board saw that the dispute comes under the Employee Inventions Act, which the Board has no competence to deal with.

For the most part, the Advisory Board agreed with the finding of the research organisation, but in two cases put forward specifying remarks and recommendations concerning the procedures in handling the disputes.

## Initiatives, publication and information

Acting on a proposal for member candidates from the Learned Societies, the National Advisory Board on Research Ethics nominated a working group ("HYMY II") on 1 November 2007 to deliberate ethics in the humanities and social sciences. It carries on the work done by the earlier "HYMY I" working group from 2002 to 2006 regarding the ethics of human sciences and pre-regulation in the humanities and social sciences. The working group held its first meeting on 4 December 2007.

The National Advisory Board on Research Ethics has maintained its active dissemination of information by means of its web site, the seminar papers published at the site and articles written by the members.

Articles written by the members and other publications:

- Archivist Arja Kuula: 'Laadullinen tutkimussuhde ja arkistoinnin etiikka' (Qualitative research relationship and the ethics of archival activities) in *Tieteessä tapahtuu* 2/2007.
- Finnish National Ethics Committees, Ritva Halila, Salla Lötjönen, Reetta Kettunen (eds.): 'Human Stem Cells, Cloning and Research' 20 pp. 2005, Helsinki, Finland, reprinted in Anila V. Menon (ed.) *Human Cloning – Legal and Ethical Dimensions*, pp. 66-83, Amicus Books, Icfai University Press, Hyderabad 2007.
- Arja Kuula: 'Tietosuoja ei estä tieteen avoimuutta', *Tietosuoja* 4/2007.
- Sami Borg and Arja Kuula: 'Julkisrahoitteisen tutkimusdatan avoin saatavuus ja elinkaari' (Open access to and lifespan of publicly funded research data) in *Yhteiskuntatieteellisen tietoarkiston julkaisuja* 6, 2007.

Interviews:

- Professor Ari Salminen: 'Julkisen toiminnan etiikan tutkimus tuo esille eurooppalaisia arvoja' (Research into the ethics of public activity highlights European values) in *Vaasan yliopistolehti* 1/2007
- Several interviewees: 'Open access — kuka kustantaa avoimen tiedon?' (Open access — who finances information in the public domain?) An article written by Tiina Raevaara on the basis of the seminar jointly arranged by the Committee of Public Information and the National Advisory Board on Research Ethics on 3 May 2007 in *Acatiimi* 5/2007.
- Archivist Arja Kuula interviewed by Päivi Vännilä in 'Etiikan arviointi kallista ja hidasta' (Ethical evaluation expensive and slow) in *Aikalainen* 5/2007.
- Adjunct Professor Marjo Kaartinen and Archivist Arja Kuula interviewed by Mia Hemming for 'Tutkimuksen tehtävä on parantaa maailmaa' (It is for research to better the world) in *Acatiimi*

## Statements issued, international activities and other cooperation

In 2007 responded to one request for enquiry and issued one opinion:

- On 1 August 2007 the Committee of Public Information requested the Advisory Board to look into the implementation of the proposals put forward by the "Science and society" committee. The Board's response is dated 27 September 2007.
- On 30 October 2007 the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health requested an opinion on the final report of a committee on the utilisation of human samples. The Board's response is dated 12 December 2007.

International meetings in which the Chair, members and the Secretary General participated in 2007:

- Director Paavo Löppönen: The American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), 2007 annual meeting, San Francisco, USA, 15–19 February .
- Director Paavo Löppönen: OECD Global Science Forum: Workshop on Best Practices for Ensuring Scientific Integrity and Preventing Misconduct, Tokyo, Japan, 22 – 23 February.
- The Chair: Nordic Workshop on Open Access, Elsinore, Denmark, 23 – 24 April .
- The Chair: Conference "Ethics, Science and Globalisation" (Capacity Building in Research Ethics), Brussels, Belgium. Presentation, 14 – 15 May: "Added value of ethics networks – national level"
- The Chair: The 9th meeting of the National Ethics Councils Forum (NEC Forum), including joint sessions with the Council of Europe's Conference of National Ethics Committees (COMETH) and with the European Group on Ethics (EGE), Berlin, Germany, 23–25 May.
- The Chair, Director Paavo Löppönen and Secretary General Salla Lötjönen: World Conference on

Research Integrity, organised by the European Science Foundation (ESF) and the US Department of Health and Human Services Office of Research Integrity (ORI), Lisbon, Portugal, 17–19 September .

- Secretary General: The 10th Meeting of the National Ethics Councils (NEC-Forum), Lisbon, Portugal, 11 – 12 October, .
- Secretary General (As member of the Nordic Bioethics Committee): A workshop organised by the Nordic Bioethics Committee on 'Dialogue on Dignity, Disability, Discrimination and Diagnostics', Iceland, 19 – 20 October .
- The Chair: An EMBO/EMBL meeting on Science & Society, Heidelberg, 2 – 3 November .
- Director Paavo Löppönen: OECD Committee for Facilitating Investigation of Misconduct in Research, Washington DC, USA, 3 – 4 December .

The Secretary General was nominated as a member representing the National Advisory Board on Research Ethics to the national support group for the 7th Framework Programme initiative "Science in Society", which is coordinated in Finland by the Academy of Finland. The group convened once during 2007 on 11 December. The Advisory Board, together with Academy of Finland, reported to the European Science Foundation for an international study, the purpose of which is to compile and compare information with research ethics and procedures to ease international co-operation. The Advisory Board was also invited to a session of the Board of the Academy of Finland on 2 October 2007 to discuss cooperation prospects and the Advisory Board's active role in creating a uniform model for résumés and lists of publications.

The National Advisory Board on Research Ethics continued its close cooperation with the other national ethical bodies (ETENE, TUKIJA, BTNK, GTLK and KYTÖ) in 2007. The ethical bodies arranged a joint panel and public discussion on "Science banks: the ethic of research material use" at Science Days on 12 January 2007. They also worked in concert to present their work during a visit by the medical ethic board of southeast Norway on 6 November 2007. During 2007 the chairs

and secretaries general of the national ethical boards and the Committee of Public Information discussed topical research ethical questions and planned future cooperation at two meetings and the secretaries met three times. The ethical bodies jointly drew up a Power Point presentation of 'Science in society – ethical assessment of research for educational use' (available in Finnish at [www.tenk.fi/ajankohtaista.htm](http://www.tenk.fi/ajankohtaista.htm)). The jointly written article Ethics Committees in Finland – Benefits of Diversity was published in issue number 8 of the periodical Ethically Speaking, which is published by the European Group on Ethics in Science and New Technologies to the European Commission. An edited version of the article was also published at the web site Research.fi, which is maintained by the Ministry of Education. In 2007 negotiations were also initiated with UNESCO and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to organise a visit by an African trainee for 2008.

## **Personnel and finance**

In 2007 the National Advisory Board on Research Ethics had only one full time employee: Secretary General Sari Löytökorpi (1 January – 31 August 2007) and Secretary General Salla Lötjönen (1 September 2007 – 31 December 2007). They were assisted up to 16 November 2007 by secretary Johanna Nieminen, whom the Advisory Board shared with the Committee of Public Information. In addition, the Board had the use of the telephone exchange, computer and caretaker services of the Federation of Finnish Learned Societies.

The Ministry of Education had granted an operational appropriation of Academy of Finland 33,400 to the National Advisory Board on Research Ethics for 2007: €18,400 for running costs and €15,000 for publication and seminars. These funds were administered by the Ministry of Education. The salary (Secretary General and secretary) and clerical funds (€73,315,35) were administered by the Federation of Finnish Learned Societies. In 2007 the secretary participated in a basic course on the FileMaker 8.0 database programme (Koulutus ja konsultointi, Kirsi Ehrnrooth)

## Appendix 1

### List of seminars and educational events other than those organised by the National Advisory Board on Research Ethics which the Chair, members or Secretary General attended in 2007

- Secretary General Sari Löytökorpi: ”Tutkimuksen eettinen arviointi Suomessa” (Ethical assessment of research) at the BITE day, TEKES, 24 January
- Chair Eero Vuorio: ”Tutkimus- ja julkaisuvilppi lääketieteen alalla Suomessa” (Fraud in research and publication). An invitational seminar on Medical misconduct – the responsibility of medical journals. Finnish Medical Journal and Finohta/National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health, 25 January.
- Secretary General Sari Löytökorpi: ”Good scientific conduct and research fraud. Postgraduate course: Ethical principles and regulations guiding health research”, University of Tampere, School of Public Health and Tampere Research Training Program for Medical Students (TRPMS), 30 January.
- Chair Eero Vuorio: ”Good scientific practice – is competition increasing violations?” Oulu Science Days, 13 February.
- Secretary General Sari Löytökorpi: ”Tutkimusetiikka” (Research ethics). Intellectual property rights education for the Academy of Finland, 14 February.
- Chair Eero Vuorio: ”Tutkimuseettisten kysymysten yleiset lähtökohdat” (General principles of research ethical questions). A seminar research ethics in archaeology, Aboa Vetus Museum, 14 March.
- Arja Kuula: Aineistonkeruun hyvät käytännöt. Lecture on a course on research ethics in the Faculty of Social Sciences. University of Helsinki 16.3. 2007.
- Chair Eero Vuorio: ”Valtion tutkimuslaitokset, yliopistot ja biopankkitoiminta. Biopankit ja lainsäädäntö Suomessa” (State research institutes, universities and bio-banks. Bio-banks and legislation in Finland). A public seminar arranged by the bio-bank committee of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health at ChemBio Finland 07, 29 March.
- Secretary General Sari Löytökorpi: ”Rekisterien käytön eettisiä kysymyksiä. Kenen käyttöön rekisterit?” (Ethical questions in the use of registers. Who can use registers?). A seminar arranged by the National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health, 19 April.
- Arja Kuula: Yksityisyyden suojan problematiikka. Lecture for the postgraduate students in history in the University of Tampere 25.4.2007.
- Sinimaaria Ranki: ”Arvot ja etiikka” (Values and ethics). Research days for polytechnic and vocational education, Diak, 11 October.
- Chair Eero Vuorio: ”Eettiset näkökulmat tutkimuksen tekemisessä: Tutkimuseettiset linjaukset” (Ethical standpoint in research. Research ethical principles). A meeting for students and instructors of the Finnish Postgraduate School in Nursing Science, 25 October.

- Secretary General Salla Lötjönen: ”Lääketieteellinen tutkimus ja suostumus arkaluonteisten terveystietojen käyttöön” (Medical research and consent to use sensitive health data). Public event ”Ask experts and permit authorities about permits and data protection in register-based research”. Finnish Information Centre for Register Research, 26 October.
- Arja Kuula: Tutkimusaineistot ja eettiset kysymykset. Lecture in the research seminar for the Unit of Science, Technology and Innovation Studies. University of Tampere 30.10.2007.
- Secretary General Salla Lötjönen: ”Hyvä tieteellinen käytäntö ja sen loukkausten käsitteleminen” (Good scientific practice and procedures for handling violations). Bioethics 2007 lecture series, University of Tampere, 31 October
- Arja Kuula: Tutkimusaineistot ja eettiset kysymykset. Lecture for postgraduate students in social policy. University of Tampere 1.11.2007.
- Secretary General Salla Lötjönen: ”National Advisory Board on Research Ethics”. Visit by the research ethics board of southeast Norway to the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, 6 November.
- Arja Kuula: Tutkimusetiikka ja tietosuojat. Lecture in the state graduate school university network in social work. University of Jyväskylä 8.11.2007.
- Arja Kuula: Tutkimusetiikka tutkijan työssä. Course organisation for the Tampere Graduate Centre for Social Sciences (24 h) together with dos. Pirjo Nikanderin kanssa 9.11.-3.12.2007.
- Secretary General Salla Lötjönen: ”Tapauksia tutkimuseettisestä neuvottelukunnasta” (Cases at the National Advisory Board on Research Ethics). Administrative research days for postgraduate students, University of Joensuu, 21 November.
- Secretary General Salla Lötjönen: ”Research Ethics, Good Scientific Practice, Violations & Fraud”, FinBioNet Graduate School PhD Student Symposium, Paasitorni, 23 November.
- Secretary General Salla Lötjönen: ”Vilppi tutkimuksessa” (Fraud in research). A lecture series in clinical research, Pirkanmaa Hospital District, 3 December.
- Arja Kuula: ”Voiko tutkimussuhdetta arkistoida?” Presentation in a plenary handling ethics at the Days of Culture Research 14.12.2007, University of Joensuu.
- Eero Vuorio: ”Biologian jatko-opiskelijan tärkeimmät eettiset valinnat” University of Turku, 18.12.2008.



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