



## Ethical considerations in setting health research priorities:

A Philippine case study – May 2025

### FACTS:

- Since 2014, around 10 high-level research priority setting (RPS) activities have been conducted in the Philippines. RPS activities vary in level (national to institutional) and can cover broad areas of public health or specific focuses such as nutrition, liver diseases, or virology.
- Government investment in conducting RPS is estimated to be around PhP14.1 million (approximately USD\$245,000).

### PROJECT CYCLE:

2024 – 2025

### PARTNERS:

The George Institute for Global Health,  
Alliance for Improving Health Outcomes

### SUPPORTERS:

The George Institute for Global Health  
Global Forum on Bioethics in Research (GfBR) Project Fellowship awarded to Reneepearl Kim Sales, with Soumyadeep Bhaumik as mentor.

### PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:

Reneepearl Kim P. Sales

### BACKGROUND:

- Research priority setting (RPS) exercises are a collective activity used to determine which research topics or questions should be prioritised. This process helps allocate resources effectively and ensures that research efforts address the most pressing and relevant issues.
- The Philippines has an established process of setting health research priorities – a combination of top-down and bottom-up processes.
- Decisions about which health research to prioritise determine how scarce resources are distributed and who ultimately benefits from research outcomes. These decisions involve value judgments about how people should be treated and what benefits they are entitled to, making ethical considerations essential for ensuring fairness and maximising social value.

### AIM:

- To analyse ethical and equity considerations in RPS exercises conducted by AIHO in the Philippines.
- To develop recommendations for better integration of ethics and equity in future RPS activities by AIHO and in the Philippines.

### METHODS:

- Conducted thematic analysis of national, network, and institutional RPS processes in the Philippines using an ethical lens - focusing on fair procedures, social value, special obligations, proportionality, and harm assessment.
- We will engage RPS practitioners in the Philippines to gather feedback on the findings and inputs to develop actionable recommendations for ethical and equity-focused RPS in the country.

### IMPACT

- Incorporating ethical considerations into health research prioritisation promotes more equitable and inclusive healthcare policies, ensuring better outcomes for underserved communities.
- This provides actionable insights for policymakers and stakeholders, supporting more effective, ethical, and equity-driven health solutions at the national level.

### CONTACT:

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