



Health Professions Council of South Africa

Revised Scope of Profession for Medical Scientists - Guidelines December 2009

The **Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA)** has announced the promulgation in the Government Gazette of 22 May 2009 of the revised Scope of the Profession of Medical Science and the regulations for the registration of students, interns and medical scientists.

The scope of practice for medical scientists includes the development, evaluation and practice of scientific procedures involving humans, human biological material or medical equipment emphasising that acts performed by medical scientists will lead to or impact on the treatment, diagnosis and counselling of humans (in the case of Genetic Counsellors) and where appropriate, interpretation, quality management, patient genetic counselling and consultation with other registered and appropriately qualified health practitioners.

Health professionals working within the scope of the medical science profession are registerable under the disciplines of Medical Biological Science, Genetic Counselling or Medical Physics and must be registered with the HPCSA as stipulated by the Health Professions Act, 1974 (Act 56 of 1974).

Research scientists, including principal investigators or collaborators who do not need to register with the HPCSA due to the scope of their work falling outside that of medical science may perform health research (including research on human material) according to protocols approved by ethics committees recognised through the National Health Research Ethics Council. Should these research scientists require access to medical records or biological material, this may be done through an appropriate HPCSA registered health practitioner or through compliance with recommendations made by ethics committees (e.g. signed documents related to confidentiality).

Health research as defined by the National Health Act, 2003 (Act No.61, 2003) includes:

any research which contributes knowledge of –

- (a) the biological, clinical, psychological or social processes in human beings;
- (b) improved methods for the provision of health services;
- (c) human pathology;
- (d) the causes of diseases;
- (e) the effects of the environment on the human body;
- (f) the development or new application of pharmaceuticals, medicines and related substances; and
- (g) the development of new applications of health technology

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Adv. B Mkhize
REGISTRAR

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