# ECTU Central Office SOP_TM_12: Preparing for a Data Monitoring Committee

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| Authorship and Approval | | | |
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| Caroline Garth, QA Manager | QA Authorisation | 22 Nov 2022 | See retained approval email dated 22 Nov 2022 |

| Document Revision History | | |
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| Version No. | Effective Date | Summary of Revisions |
| 1.0 | 01 Oct 2012 | Initial creation |
| 2.0 | 30 May 2016 | Document extensively rewritten as part of regular review process. Working checklist removed and sections 3.1-3.8 added. Alteration to name. Document references added to section 4 |
| 3.0 | 25 July 2018 | Updated at scheduled review. Document moved to new SOP template. Minor revisions to section 1 and 2. Formatting changes throughout (subsections added and renumbering throughout).<br>Section 3.6.3 now included in section 3.4. Reference to QC Checks added to section 3.4. |
| 4.0 | 20 Aug 2020 | Updated at scheduled review. SOP author and reviewer changed. Section 3.6 (arrangements for members who |

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| | | cannot attend in person) removed. Minor revisions throughout. |
| 5.0 | 10 Dec 2020 | Minor revisions to section 3.2.3 to clarify the role of the Trial Statistician. |
| 6.0 | 25 Nov 2022 | SOP has been transferred onto the new SOP template. Section 3 has been included which has had a knock on effect to the numbering of subsequent sections.<br>Sections 4.8.2 and 5.0 were updated to remove reference to an obsolete ECTU SOP.<br>Minor changes throughout to clarify where documents will be retained. |

## 1.0 PURPOSE

The remit of a Data Monitoring Committee (DMC) is to ensure the safety of trial subjects and to keep the Trial Steering Committee (TSC) informed of their findings and to make recommendations on whether there are any ethical or safety reasons the trial should not continue. In order that they can report to the TSC the DMC will typically hold their meeting prior to the TSC. The ethical conduct of the trial, based on accumulating data, is at the heart of the DMC discussions.

This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) provides instruction on preparing for and arranging Data Monitoring Committee (DMC) Meetings.

## 2.0 SCOPE

This SOP applies to all University of Edinburgh staff employed within ECTU who are responsible for organising DMC Meetings if required throughout the study. This SOP will primarily be used by the Trial Manager or designee.

## 3.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of the delegated Trial Management team to ensure that:

- The DMC is established and a DMC Charter created according to any sponsor, funder or contractual obligations.
- The DMC meetings follow the procedures laid out in the DMC Charter, including timely distribution of reports and recommendations.

## 4.0 PROCEDURE

Requirement for a DMC, or other formal data monitoring arrangement, will be detailed in the trial protocol. The DMC may also be known as Data and Safety Monitoring Committee (DSMC), Data Monitoring and Ethics Committee (DMEC), Trial Monitoring Committee (TMC); Independent Data Monitoring Committee (IDMC), Data and Safety Monitoring Board (DSMB), etc.

### 4.1 DMC Members

4.1.1 A formal DMC usually consists of 3 or more independent individuals comprising of clinicians and at least one statistician. In the case of inter-group trials or international collaborations consideration should be given to broad representation.

4.1.2 All potential DMC members should have sight of the protocol/outline before agreeing to join the committee.

4.1.3 DMC members should be independent and constructively critical of the ongoing trial, but also supportive of aims and methods.

4.1.4 For commercial studies it may be necessary for DMC members to sign a contract making clear the need for confidentiality and the liability status of the DMC members. Signed contracts will be filed in section 10.1 of the TMF.

4.1.5 All DMC members will be required to sign a Competing Interests form (see Annex 1 of ECTU DMC Charter template for an example). Completed forms will be filed in section 10.1 of the TMF.

4.1.6 If the DMC has any overseas members (including Rep. of Ireland), funder guidance should be checked for any specific requirements regarding these members.

## 4.2 DMC Roles and Responsibilities

### 4.2.1 DMC Chairperson

The Chair facilitates and summarises discussions and encourages consensus. In each area of discussion the chair should give their own opinion last.

### 4.2.2 DMC Statistician

The DMC membership includes a statistician who will provide independent statistical expertise.

### 4.2.3 Trial Statistician

The Trial Statistician will produce (or oversee the production of) the open report for the DMC and may participate in the open session of DMC meetings, guiding the DMC through the blinded report, participating in DMC discussions and, on some occasions, taking notes. The Trial Statistician may liaise with an unblinded statistician, who will prepare the unblinded report for the DMC and may participate in the closed session of DMC meetings.

## 4.3 DMC Charter

4.3.1 The membership, role and function of the DMC should be well described in writing in the DMC Charter and protocol before the DMC reviews any trial data.

4.3.2 The appointed members of the DMC will draw up and agree a DMC Charter, which will specify the frequency of meetings, key aspects of the trial data for review etc.

4.3.4 It is the Sponsor's responsibility to ensure that a Charter is in place for the DMC when it is established.

4.3.5 For UoE/NHSL sponsored studies, the DMC SOP and DMC Charter template available from ACCORD will be used (see section 4). Studies with a different Sponsor may provide their own guidance and template.

4.3.6 Alternatively, if no specific Sponsor template is available, the ECTU DMC Charter template can be used (see section 5).

4.3.7 The CI, Trial Statistician, DMC members and any members of the trial management group (if required) should discuss and decide all the points covered in the Charter template, including:

- how often interim safety and efficacy data should be monitored. It is recommended that data is monitored periodically with sufficient gaps so that a meaningful amount of new data can accumulate between meetings.
- the expected frequency of DMC meetings;
- whether reports to the DMC will be available before the meeting or only at/during the meeting; what is considered quorate for decision making;
- attendance arrangements for meetings (e.g. can DMC members who missed the meeting still input an opinion, do non-attenders need to resign);
- how meetings will be facilitated in different situations (e.g. face-to-face, videoconference or teleconference);
- will the DMC be blinded to the treatment allocation;
- who will see the accumulating data and interim analysis (e.g. only the closed session);
- are there any issues specific to the disease or treatment under study to be considered;
- who will be responsible for identifying and circulating external evidence (e.g. from other trials/ systematic reviews);
- whether there will be an open session and if so, who should attend.

4.3.8 The finalised DMC Charter will be filed in section 10.1 of the TMF.

### 4.4 General Meeting Guidance

4.4.1 When organising a meeting, the Trial Manager or designee should ensure that the date, time and suitable venue for the meeting has been finalised and that all committee members and the trial statistician are aware and have confirmed their availability.

4.4.2 It should be ensured before a meeting is conducted that there are enough independent vs non-independent members attending to achieve a quorate for decision making (as defined in the Charter). If there is not, the meeting should be rescheduled.

4.4.3 DMC meetings to review unblinded data will be closed meetings at which the Sponsor and trial team will not be present.

4.4.4 The CI may be asked and should be available to attend open meetings of the DMC to discuss its conclusions and recommendations. Other trial management members will not usually be expected to attend but can attend open sessions when necessary.

4.4.5 Prior to scheduling a DMC meeting the Trial Manager or designee should confirm with the Trial Statistician (or the Unblinded Statistician) and the data management team when to take the data snapshot.

4.4.6 If a Data Quality Check Plan is in place for the study, the proposed schedule for the checks may be aligned to the expected dates for the DMC (and/or TSC) Meetings,

however the Trial Manager or designee should ensure that the QC Checker is made aware of the finalised date so that adjustments can be made if necessary.

4.4.7 The Trial Statistician or Unblinded Statistician will prepare a report for the DMC. The trial management team will only provide input to the non-confidential sections of the DMC report. Care must be taken to ensure that unblinded data is not made available to blinded members of the study team.

4.4.8 The Trial Manager or designee will prepare an agenda and any related documents for the meeting as directed by the Chair and CI. These should be circulated to the Chair in the first instance for comment. The Trial Manager or designee and the DMC Chair will ensure that the DMC report, agenda and any other required reports/minutes have been circulated prior to the meeting.

4.4.9 Conflicts of Interest should be included on the agenda as a standing item. A Disclosure of Competing Interest Form should be completed for each member of the DMC and filed in section 10.1 of the TMF.

4.4.10 The date of the DMC is to be recorded on the trial project plan (e.g. Gannt chart), if available.

4.4.11 The minutes for the open session will usually be taken by the Trial Manager or designee however alternative arrangements will need to be made for the closed session. Minutes should be reviewed by chair of DMC before circulation and filed in section 10.1 of the TMF.

### 4.5 Preparations for the first meeting

4.5.1 It is recommended that, if possible, the DMC meets before the trial starts or early in the course of the trial, to discuss the protocol, the trial, any analysis plan, future meetings, and to have the opportunity to clarify any aspects with the principal investigators. It is important to define the data they will review at these meetings to give the trial team time to prepare the information prior to the meeting. As well as trial data it may also be useful for the DMC to review the screening data, adverse event data or follow-up data collection for example. The Trial Manager should confirm if an initial “dummy” report with empty tables will be used at the first meeting to familiarise the DMC members with the format that will be used in the reports or if the DMC want to review data at the first meeting.

4.5.2 The DMC Chair will be responsible for arranging the inaugural meeting and the Trial Manager will usually facilitate this.

4.5.3 The DMC Charter template should be circulated to the DMC members in advance of the meeting by the Trial Manager, so that the specifics can be discussed during the meeting.

4.5.4 A summary of the trial timelines should be prepared and circulated along with a copy of the protocol.

### 4.6 After the meeting

4.6.1 The DMC Chair will send the CI or Trial Manager a letter or a meeting report which is to be filed in section 10.1 of the TMF.

4.6.2 The Trial Manager or designee will follow up on points to be actioned from the meeting. Any recommendations made by the DMC will be reported in writing by the DMC chair and if possible should be sent in time for consideration at a TSC meeting.

4.6.3 The Trial Manager or designee will ensure the DMC report/letter is distributed to the TSC or Sponsor's representative, the CI and the trial statistician.

4.6.4 The Sponsor, or delegated representative, should notify the REC of any recommendations made by the DMC if necessary and provide summary reports of interim analyses where appropriate. It is not considered necessary for the REC to see the minutes of all DMC meetings.

4.6.5 If the trial is to continue largely unchanged it is useful for the report from the DMC to include a summary paragraph suitable for trial promotion purposes i.e. to be circulated to trial sites.

### 4.7 Expenses

4.7.1 Members will be reimbursed for any reasonable travel and subsistence costs. These can be charged against the grant for the trial (if costed for in the budget).

4.7.2 Where practical, the travel arrangements should be made by the relevant team member at ECTU. Otherwise, DMC members will be asked by the Trial Manager or designee to retain their receipts for expenses claims and provide a University of Edinburgh Claim for Expenses form to complete. Expenses claims should abide by the University and/or funder policy (e.g. no first class travel, etc.).

### 4.8 Publications

4.8.1 DMC members will be named (unless they specifically ask not to be) in the primary published report. A brief summary of the timings and conclusions of DMC meetings should be included in the body of this paper.

4.8.2 Often the DMC will be given the opportunity to read and comment on any publications before submission.

## 5.0 RELEVANT DOCUMENTS AND REFERENCES

**ACCORD SOP CR015 Data Monitoring Committee and Trial Steering Committee Charters**
(www.accord.scot/research-access/resources-researchers/sop)

**ECTU DMC Charter Template**
ECT Unit/SOPs/Finalised SOP and WPD/TM/Supporting Documents and Templates