**FSTREC guidance for projects involving participants with depression**

Participants with moderate-to-severe depression are a vulnerable clinical group, and projects using such participants would be considered clinical in nature. Projects like these should be carried out in collaboration with health care professionals and will probably need NHS involvement. FST REC is unable to provide ethical approval in these cases. Instead, ethical clearance could be sought through NHSREC, with Lancaster University sponsoring the project. Please seek further advice about sponsorship for clinical work at [https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/research/research-services/research-integrity-ethics--governance/university-sponsorship/](https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/research/research-services/research-integrity-ethics--governance/university-sponsorship/). You can also write to: sponsorship@lancaster.ac.uk

If your project is focusing on participants with mild depression, there may be issues of duty of care to consider. This would occur, for example, if you intend to use clinical questionnaires to identify people with moderate-to-severe depression for the purpose of excluding them from the study. Such people need to know that the result of the questionnaire is the reason why they are being excluded. However, they cannot just be turned away with a diagnosis of moderate-to-severe depression but, instead, some effort must be made to assist such people in seeking help. FSTREC will consider your application on a case-by-case basis, but our recommendation is that your project involve the help of a psychologist or a health care specialist who can administer the questionnaire and interpret the results professionally, assess whether the excluded participant is at risk of self-harm, as well as personally direct the excluded participant to the appropriate sources of help. If participation is anonymous (e.g., in an online study), then the participant should be guided to seek further help and they should also be invited to get in touch with the psychologist/specialist on the project to seek further guidance.