INSTITUTIONAL ETHICS COMMITTEE (IEC)
Seth G. S. Medical College and KEM Hospital, Mumbai.

Annexure 10
AX 10/SOP 05-A/V7.1
(This template should be customized according to the requirement of individual research project)

Sample Format for Informed Consent Document for Genetic Studies

This document will, in general, follow the format of the informed consent document contained in Annexure 8 AX 08/SOP 05-A/V 7. The additional specific components related to genetic studies are elucidated here.
These guidelines are meant to provide assistance in framing informed consent documents for genetic research studies. The examples given may be inserted, where relevant, by the investigator/sponsor.

A. Project Title and Purpose of the Study

Given the more complex nature of genetic research, the sponsor/investigator should make the nature of the research abundantly clear to the research participant. The sponsor/investigator should also generally define genetic/genomic research in the context of the study under consideration in layman's terms. If the investigator so desires, a glossary of genetic terms used may also be provided.

Example:

1. *The purpose of this document is to enable you to understand the nature of the research that we are undertaking. Do take time to review this document IEC fully and do not hesitate to ask the investigator any question or clarification related to the research.*
2. *This study involves the analysis of how genes, blood components or DNA relate to the way that investigational therapies are absorbed, broken down and eliminated from the body, how they affect the body and how DNA relates to human disease."*

B. Study Procedures to be followed

The sponsor/investigator should explain in layman's terms the procedure to obtain any genetic material/tissue from a research participant.

C. Risks and Discomforts

The sponsor/investigator must explain the risks involved in the procedures to obtain any genetic material/tissue. Separate risks relating to genetic information obtained should also be explained.

Example: "There is a chance that participation in this study could cause psychological distress, social and economic harm either to you individually or to your community."

D. Possible benefits of the study

The sponsor/investigator ought to mention benefits if any that may accrue to the participants/community. If no such benefits are seen/ guaranteed at this point in time, the same may be explicitly stated. However, if there is a possibility of long-term societal benefits, this should be incorporated. The sponsor should also state his/her policy regarding commercial benefit to participant/community.

E. What happens when the research trial stops?

The storage of samples, the duration of such storage, the method of destruction of such samples should be stated. The possibility, if any, of using such samples in the future by the same or different investigators should be mentioned. Also, if the genetic study is being carried out as a sub-study, it ought to be stated that stoppage of the genetic study would not result in automatic cessation of the main study. If the study is stopped before schedule and the data is not anonymised, the option of knowing the results of the study should be made available to the research participant. Moreover, if the results of the study indicate that there might be implications for the participant, as regards future medical conditions; appropriate counseling ought to be provided. For example, the necessity of avoiding certain drugs in the future should be explained.

The genetic studies are often carried out as part of basic research and the data generated in initial studies is inadequate. It may inappropriate to use the preliminary data in management of patient's condition. This aspect needs to be explained (whenever applicable).

Example: *These analyses are done as part of basic research. Basic research analyses are performed under conditions that are different from routine laboratory testing that your doctor may do. Therefore, it would not generally be appropriate for your doctor to use these results as part of your IEC."*

F. Compensation for participation and Treatment and Compensation for study related injury

The provisions of the earlier format contained in Annexure 8 AX 08/SOP 05-A/V 7 are applicable.

G. Right to withdraw from the study

If the genetic study is being carried on as a sub-study, withdrawal from the genetic study should not affect participation in the main study**.** The participant should be given the right to request for destruction of his/her sample provided the sample has not been anonymised till that time.

H. Confidentiality

The participant should be informed whether the samples are to be unidentified, unlinked or coded as defined in the ICMR Guidelines, 2017. If the investigator does not intend to disclose the results of the study (for example, in the case of a preliminary/pilot study), the samples should be 'anonymous.'

If the investigator intends to disclose the results of the genetic testing, the participant should have the right to decide whether or not he desires such disclosure. Family members are not entitled to know each others' diagnosis and specific consent is needed from a participant before sharing the information with family members.

Example: *The investigator will provide the genetic analyses to your family, the doctor conducting the main study or any doctor involved in your IEC, your insurance funding agency or your employer, only after obtaining your written consent. However, this is subject to the requirement of disclosure of such information to a court of law. It may also be made accessible to members of the IEC and regulators*".