Dear [Ethics Committee name]

Re: SPRINT SARI and ECMOCARD CRF data collection tool

On 31 December 2019, WHO was informed of a cluster of cases of pneumonia of unknown cause detected in Wuhan City, Hubei Province of the People’s Republic of China. Subsequently a novel coronavirus has been identified as the cause of their illness, namely COVID-19.

Based on a pre-existing global observational study of severe acute respiratory infections (SPRINT-SARI) the International Severe Acute Respiratory and Emerging Infection Consortium (ISARIC) have prepared a case record form (CRF) to assist with the collection of standardised clinical data on patients hospitalized with suspected or confirmed infection with COVID-19. The Asia-Pacific Extracorporeal Life Support Organization (APELSO) has created an international working party that has added specific clinical data related to patients admitted to an intensive care unit and treated with mechanical ventilation and/or extracorporeal membrane oxygenation. This case report form has undergone extensive review and validation by international clinical experts. This is the ExtraCorporeal Membrane Oxygenation for 2019 novel Coronovirus Acute Respiratory Disease (ECMOCARD) trial.

In the past, clinical data on emerging infections has been lost and therefore not collected, standardized, or shared quickly enough to inform the outbreak response and patient care. The aim of this COVID-19 CRF is to provide a tool for standardized data collection to inform local and international public health responses and patient care. The CRF is designed to collect data obtained through clinical examination, interview and review of hospital notes. As no personal data is collected, patients will not be required to give consent. We hope this data will help the international community but equally assist each contributing country.

Data will be entered onto a central electronic database called REDCap. REDCap is a secure web platform for building and managing online databases, hosted by the University of Oxford. Data from Australian and New Zealand centres will be hosted by Monash University. All information entered onto the database will be anonymised and the University of Oxford or Monash University will not be able to identify patients from these records. Data ownership will remain with the Data Submitter. Full details of how the data will be handled is detailed in the ECMOCARD study protocol.

We request your assistance with expedited review of this data collection tool to enable us to implement this as soon as possible in [insert institution/department here].

Please don’t hesitate to contact me if you require any further information.

Yours sincerely