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To whom it may concern:

COVID-19 Critical Care Consortium Incorporating ECMOCARD study

I have read the protocol for the COVID-19 Critical Care Consortium Incorporating ECMOCARD study with a view to supporting the group with any ethical issues that may arise. This project aims to record clinical outcome data in order to better understand the pathogenesis, progress and effectiveness of normal variations of clinical care in the outcome of COVID-19.

The study aims to systematically audit and study the outcomes of clinical care as it is administered in the course of treatment in different healthcare systems around the world, and in so doing, it aims to produce and analyse data that will enable us to ascertain the best practice.

In the course of the project, patients receive care according to the best clinical judgement of their treating physicians. The study simply collects the data on treatments and outcomes for comparison on a global scale. This comparison will enable the group to establish which variations in care are producing the best patient outcome in a real time fashion.

The project is well-designed from an ethical perspective—it protects privacy, confidentiality and patient welfare—but is also ethically required. It is only by systematically auditing and studying the outcomes of clinical care that care can be improved. Every day we fail to maximize the effectiveness of clinical care, more patients avoidably die. There is an ethical imperative to gather and analyse this data as quickly as possible. Clinicians need to know what works, and what doesn't work. It is only by collecting and bringing together international experience that care can be improved.

I have been involved with COVID-19 Critical Care Consortium Incorporating ECMOCARD since mid-March and have engaged with the global group of collaborators as they have designed the project across time zones, language, and online barriers, providing support on the ethical issues that arise in the design of a complex study of patient data. The co-ordination and attention to detail of the group in the midst of the urgent pandemic has been deeply impressive.

In the past, I have been Editor of the *Journal of Medical Ethics* for over 10 years. I am currently Co-Director of the Wellcome Strategic Centre for Ethics and Humanities at the University of Oxford. I was Chair of the Department of Human Services Ethics Committee in Victoria Australia and designed the University of Oxford's ethics review processes. In my view, the COVID-19 Critical Care Consortium Incorporating ECMOCARD study is in line with current best practice. I



believe its design will not only help make progress on our current COVID-19 issues, but also has a great deal of potential for reuse to support the development of evidence-based medicine without affecting individual patients' care.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Julian Savulescu'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'J'.

Professor Julian Savulescu FAHMS
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