

- Always disclose financial relationships or any other interests in the outcome of the research.
- Acknowledge only those who made a meaningful contribution to the study.
- Be ready and willing to share data, methods, analyses, and results.
- Clearly identify any assumptions, limitations, or outstanding questions in the research.

## 15-1 Discussion Points

### Ethics and Data Collection

1. Is it ethical to use prisoners as subjects if they understand the potential risks and/or benefits and have given their consent?
  - Is it ethical to offer an incentive for consent, such as additional privileges or a reduced sentence?
  - Does the size and scope of the potential benefit of the study impact this assessment?
2. Do you think the Milgram experiment described in this section was unethical? Why or why not?
  - Does the finding that only 1% of participants regretted their involvement affect your view?
3. Is potential psychological harm any different from potential physical harm?
4. Is it unethical to intentionally infect test subjects who are humans? What about animals?
5. Identify three survey topics that you think would have high or low response rates based on their salience and/or social desirability.
6. Volunteer bias is well documented on the topic of human sexuality. What are some other topics that might have high risk for this bias?
7. Have you ever been asked to volunteer in a survey or poll via the Internet, telephone, or mail? Do you think these studies were intentionally exploiting interviewer bias to generate a specific result?
8. Reducing sample bias may result in a less positive outcome overall, which may delay or stop the release of a drug that a subset of the population might benefit from. Is this an acceptable tradeoff?

### Ethics and Analysis

1. Is peer review an effective mechanism to protect against data fabrication or use of inappropriate statistical methods? Why or why not?
2. One article on the topic of statistical errors in medical research listed 47 potential sources of error. Try to identify 5 potential sources of error.

### Ethics and Reporting

1. What is medical ghostwriting? Is the practice of medical ghostwriting unethical?
2. Should common standards exist for claiming authorship of a study? What should be included in those standards?
3. Is the law requiring disclosure of payments sufficient to protect against financial support skewing study results? Do you have any other recommendations?
4. Find and identify a recent example where nonsignificant results were reported by the media. Do you consider such examples to be unethical?
5. Should there be any standards for reporting statistical results? What are some items that those standards should include?
6. How does the disclosure of financial support affect your perception of a study's legitimacy? Do the amount and/or source of funding affect this perception?