

Principles based Ethical Research

Practical Research Ethics

Hugh Rabagliati

Department of Psychology
The University of Edinburgh

AY 2021-2022

Plan for this mini-course

Learn to do Research Ethics

- The principles behind ethical research
- The laws behind ethical research
- How to apply for ethical review

2 / 11

Why do we bother with ethical review?

- 1930s: Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan conduct abominable experiments on prisoners.
- 1930s: USA begins Tuskegee Syphilis Study.
- 1950s: Milgram conducts obedience to authority study.
- 2000s: Numerous high-profile psychologists (Marc Hauser, Diederick Stapel) accused of publishing falsified data.
- 2010s: British consulting firm Cambridge Analytica harvests personal data from millions of Facebook users.



**BPS Code
of Human
Research
Ethics**



3 / 11

Principles-based research ethics



British Psychological Society

- Respect for the autonomy and dignity of persons
- Social responsibility
- Maximising benefit and minimising harm
- Scientific value



American Psychological Association

- Respect for persons and autonomy
- Justice
- Trust
- Beneficence and nonmaleficence
- Fidelity and Scientific Integrity

4 / 11

Respect for persons

What does it mean to conduct research based on respect for individuals?

- If a doctor were to ask you to take part in a medical study, what would you want to know ahead of time?

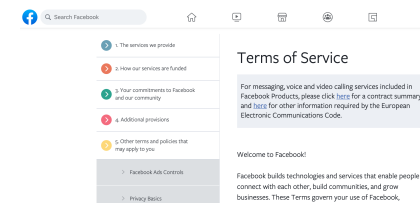
A key marker of respect for persons is *informed consent*

- Full disclosure of all information, including risk and benefits
- Listing of the obligations and responsibilities of both parties

5 / 11

Potential concerns about fully informed consent

Confusion



- Understandable information sheets

Comprehension



- Distinguish consent from assent

6 / 11

Social responsibility

Justice

Ethically assigning the burdens as well as the benefits of research.

- Imagine: *A study to train working memory in children...*
- How do you ethically assign children to Test and Control groups?

7 / 11

Social responsibility

Justice

Ethically assigning the burdens as well as the benefits of research.

- Imagine: *A study to train working memory in children...*
- How do you ethically assign children to Test and Control groups?

Trust

Ensuring your participants' participation and data are protected.

- For example, keeping data *Confidential* versus *Anonymous*
- *Confidential data*. Identity of the participant is stored by the researcher, but cannot be accessed by others.
- *Anonymous data*. Identity of the participant is not even known by researcher.

8 / 11

Maximising benefit and minimising harm

Do good, and do no harm

- The goal of minimising harm is why *deception* is typically frowned upon, and must be accompanied by a debrief.

9 / 11

Scientific value

Psychological science is a **community** exercise: Your participants, your collaborators, your readers and your peers.

Research misconduct harms all of these individuals.

10 / 11

Next time:

General Data Protection Regulations