

Ethical Issues in Psychological Research

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Over recent years there has been a growing interest in the ethical issues in psychological research [1]. Research ethics involves the application of fundamental ethical principles to a scientific research. These include the design and implementation of research involving human and animal. Research ethics is most developed as a concept in medical research. The key agreements here are the 1964 Declaration of Helsinki and The Nuremberg Code is a former agreement. Research in the social sciences represents a different set of issues than those in medical research [2].

Research ethics in psychological research field is an important issue as this research field includes the design and implementation of research involving human experimentation and animal experimentation. Ethical principles require that any research involving human subjects is framed and conducted in a way that respects the human rights of the individuals concerned.

Based on the research ethic principles, the researchers in the psychological field have to applied ethical considerations when conduct their research. One of these principles is that the researcher should be ensuring voluntary and informed consent before participation in research and avoiding harm to research participants. This harm could be verbal, gesture or physical. Additionally, the researchers have to take approval from institutional review board (IRB) before conducting the research. In addition, ensuring that research is accessible participants is considered vital principle. Moreover, the researchers have to maintain the highest professional research standards and competencies [3,4].

Psychological research faces many challenges in regard to ethics. These challenges contain ensuring accountability. For instance, some groups of research participants are assumed unable of participate in research due to limitation related to age, sex or low intellectual abilities. Another challenge is related to sharing data about participants. Furthermore, there are other social challenges related to labeling, stereotypical assumptions of research participants and discrimination [5]. Brewer [6], in a study of the 57 articles published in the "British Journal of Social Psychology", indicated that three studies stood out as possibly violating the ethical principles.

Unfortunately, research ethics is a relatively new domain in research community. Lot of researchers doesn't mention the ethical considerations, such as completed consent form and an institutional review board (IRB) approval, in their research. There isn't consensus about the vital ethical principles that should underlie the research endeavor. Furthermore, many universities and institutions haven't till now IRB or have nominal board. Moreover, researchers in the psychological field need training in the research ethics.

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