



Online Ethics Center
FOR ENGINEERING AND SCIENCE

Unwilling Research Subjects

Author(s)

Atwood D. Gaines

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2000

Description

A scenario meant to stimulate discussion about the ethical issues that arise when researchers propose to do research on a marginalized ethnic group who are already suspicious of research.

Body

A research group in an urban US area wishes to study the effects of a disease in a marginalized ethnic group. Researchers expect results will help future generations, but not research subjects themselves. Members of the group do not wish to be involved in research because of widespread popular knowledge of unethical research conducted on members of their group in the past. The research group seeks to counter the unwillingness of the group's members to be research subjects.

- Should the researchers attempt to counter the unwillingness of the potential research subjects? If so, in what ways might the research group attempt to do so?

Notes

Caroline Whitbeck introduced methods and modules for discussing numerous issues in responsible conduct of research at a Sigma Xi Forum in 2000. Partial funding for the development of this material came from an NIH grant.

You can find the entire sequence on the OEC at [Scenarios for Ethics Modules in the Responsible Conduct of Research](#). Some information in these historical modules may be out-of-date; for instance, there may be a new edition of the professional society's code that is referred to in an item. If you have suggestions for updates, please contact the OEC.

Contributor(s)

Caroline Whitbeck

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