Selection of Subjects & Ethics in Research

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PSY 6217 - Research Design

Statistical Issues

- Populations and samples
- Effects of selection method on generalizability of outcomes
  - Random selection
  - Representativeness of the sample
  - Random assignment to conditions
- Volunteer problem
- Special problems posed by data collection on the internet

Ethical Issues in the Use of Human Participants

- Institutional Review Boards
- Informed consent
- Voluntary participation
- Protection from harm
- Problems posed by deception
- Debriefing

http://www.uwf.edu/cstanny/webbasedtraining/
Obtaining Informed Consent

Who can legally give informed consent?

Obtaining informed consent on behalf of minors

Vulnerable populations
- Children
- Populations that are dependent (e.g., individuals in institutions such as prisons, nursing homes, etc.)
- Populations that might easily be exploited for research (e.g., seriously ill, economically disadvantaged, etc.)

Elements of Informed Consent

- Statement that the study involves research
- Purpose of the research & expected duration
- Description of procedures used. Disclose all features of the research that might influence the decision about participation.
- Potential risks associated with participation
- Potential benefits associated with participation
- Disclose alternative sources of these same benefits (if relevant)

Elements of Informed Consent (continued)

- Information about the level of confidentiality of the data collected
- Research that involves risk must explain compensation and treatments available if participant is injured & information about who to contact
- Contact information for answers to questions about the research and participant rights
- Statement that participation is voluntary and reminder of the right to decline to participate or withdraw from the experiment
Protection from Risk

- Types of risk
  - Physical risk
  - Psychological risk
  - Social risk
- What constitutes minimal risk?
- Confidentiality of data
- Problems posed by deception

Deception

- Compromises ability to obtain informed consent
- Risk of psychological harm associated with being deceived
- Active deception
- Passive forms of deception
- Technical illusions

Debriefing

- Explain all aspects of the research
- Disclose and explain any deception used & explain why this deception was necessary
- Answer questions the participant might have
- Opportunity to learn about the participant’s interpretation of experimental conditions (manipulation checks)
- Teach participants about the research process
Use of Animals in Research

- Animal Care & Use Committee
- Value of animal research
- Obtaining animals for use in research
- Regulations concerning housing & use of animals in research

Scientific Misconduct

- Ethical issues in the profession of scientific research
- Protection of human participants & humane treatment of animals
- Integrity of data collection
- Authorship issues