

"Responsible Conduct of Research, 2nd Edition"

Adil E. Shamoo & David B. Resnik, 2009, 429 pages, Oxford University Press, \$39.95

Review by Norman M. Goldfarb

"Responsible Conduct of Research, 2nd Edition" is a comprehensive introduction to ethical issues in research, including clinical research. The new edition includes substantial new material, including new chapters on collaboration between academia and private industry, protecting vulnerable subjects in research genetics, cloning and stem cell research, and international research.

This book has been selected for
[The First Clinical Research Bookshelf](#)
Essential reading for clinical research professionals

Bioethics is interesting because many of the answers are not obvious. To start with, there are numerous ethical theories. In grossly simplified terms, seven of them are:

- Kantian ethics says that motives are important. One should do the right action for the right reason. Also, every human being has inherent worth that demands respect.
- Utilitarian ethics says that the priority is to produce the best overall consequences for the most people. One should do what promotes the common good.
- Natural law ethics says that some things (such as life, happiness and health) are naturally good, while other things (such as death, disease and suffering) are naturally evil. One should do what promotes the good things and minimizes the bad things, with special attention to unintended consequences.
- Virtue ethics says that ethical conduct has to do with living a virtuous life. By practicing virtuous behavior, we develop virtuous traits, such as honesty, fairness and courage. One should do what one's virtuous beliefs and principles tell one to do.
- Natural rights ethics says that all people have basic rights (such as life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness) that do not depend on any other duties, obligations or values. One should do what protects these natural rights, balancing the rights of the individual against the rights of the community, which consists of individuals.
- Social contract theory says that moral standards are rules that people adopt to form a just society for their mutual advantage. One should do what promotes the just functioning of society.
- Divine command theory says that God, in his infinite wisdom, has set forth rules (e.g., do not murder or steal) that must be followed. One should do what these commandments require.

The challenge, of course, arises when these ethical theories conflict. For example, Kantian ethics focuses on motives and prioritizes individual rights, while utilitarian ethics focuses on consequences and prioritizes community rights. To help researchers make ethical decisions, the book includes a decision-making flowchart and presents detailed considerations throughout. In human research ethics, the conflict between Kantian ethics (protecting the study subject) and utilitarian ethics (developing new treatments) plays out in placebo controls, vulnerable populations, and many other areas.

The book consists of 16 chapters:

- Scientific Research and Ethics

- Ethical Decision Making
- Data Acquisition and Management
- Mentoring and Collaboration
- Collaboration between Academia and Private Industry
- Authorship
- Publication and Peer Review
- Misconduct in Research
- Intellectual Property
- Conflicts of Interest and Scientific Objectivity
- The Use of Animals in Research
- The Protection of Human Subjects in Research
- Protecting Vulnerable Subjects in Research
- Genetics, Cloning and Stem Cell Research
- International Research
- Conclusion

Each chapter includes discussion cases that illuminate the issues raised in the chapter. An appendix includes a sample policy and procedures for responding to allegations of research misconduct.

The book is available in bookstores.

Reviewer

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