

# Academic Ethics

SOAR - Humanistic Social Sciences

---

Michaela Philip

August 30, 2026

Department of Economics  
Emory University

# Welcome!



## About Me

- she/her
- B.S. in Public Health from UAB in 2022
- PhD in Economics from Emory in 2027 (hopefully)
- Certified Fun Aunt™

# Academic Ethics

---

# The Belmont Report (1979)

Published by the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research and notes importance of

1. Respect for Persons
2. Beneficence
3. Justice

(Department of Health, Education, and Welfare and National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 2014)

# Basic Ethical Principles

## Respect for Persons

- individuals “should be treated as autonomous agents”
- those with “diminished autonomy are entitled to protection”
- *informed consent*

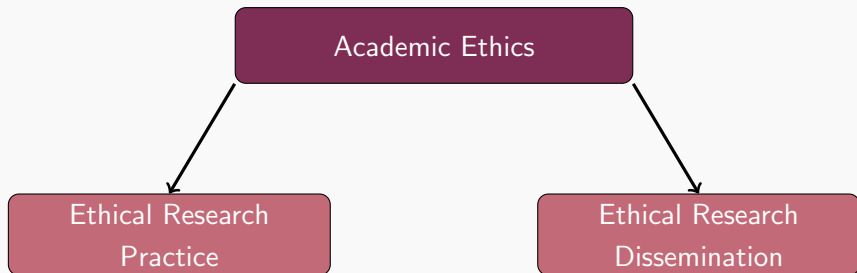
## Beneficence

- do no harm
- maximize benefits and minimize harm
- how do you weigh the societal benefits against the individual risk?
- *assessment of risks and benefits*

## Justice

- burdens and benefits should not be borne disproportionately
- ensure subjects are not being selected due to “easy availability,” “compromised position,” or “manipulability”
- *selection of subjects*

## Two Applications



# **Ethical Research Practices**

---

## Ethical Failures - Tuskegee



(Nix, 2017)

- USPHS study active from 1932-1972
- 600 African American men, 399 with latent syphilis and 201 without
- no treatment despite widespread use of penicillin by 1947
- lasting impacts on medical mistrust (Alsan and Wanamaker, 2018)

# Research without Human Participants

How do we apply these ethical principles to studies that don't involve human subjects?

## Research without Human Participants

How do we apply these ethical principles to studies that don't involve human subjects?

Construct your theoretical model with **well-defined, transparent** assumptions

*What is correlated with my outcome?*

*What causally impacts my outcome?*

*How are unobservables distributed throughout the population?*

## Example: Aizer and Currie (2019)

Outcome: Children's in-school detention or suspension

## Example: Aizer and Currie (2019)

Outcome: Children's in-school detention or suspension

Correlated Variables: race, income, gender

## Example: Aizer and Currie (2019)

Outcome: Children's in-school detention or suspension

Correlated Variables: race, income, gender

Causal Variables (possibilities): family dynamics/support, environmental exposures

## Example: Aizer and Currie (2019)

Outcome: Children's in-school detention or suspension

Correlated Variables: race, income, gender

Causal Variables (possibilities): family dynamics/support, environmental exposures

### **Novel Finding**

Aizer and Currie find that lead exposure increased the likelihood of suspension for boys by 6% and detention by 57%

## Practice - Outlining Assumptions

1. Opioid overdose mortality rates
2. Math test score gaps
3. Teen pregnancy rates

## Case Study - Uganda (Wagner et al., 2020)

- Community Health Workers (CHWs) told to distribute treatment for child diarrhea
- randomly assigned to either sell or give away for free
- sellers made significantly fewer house visits than those distributing for free

## Case Study - Uganda (Wagner et al., 2020)

- Community Health Workers (CHWs) told to distribute treatment for child diarrhea
- randomly assigned to either sell or give away for free
- sellers made significantly fewer house visits than those distributing for free

Community input and guidance is **vital** to successful intervention design.

# **Ethical Research Dissemination**

---

## Do

- make a note of every decision
- keep code and data organized
- write a clear description of methods
- use intuitive, descriptive names

## Do Not

- edit raw data
- code in the terminal
- leave out important procedural steps
- “final” “final 2” “actual final” “doc1”

Sometimes, research yields insignificant or null results.

Sometimes, research yields insignificant or null results.

That's okay!

Sometimes, research yields insignificant or null results.

That's okay!

Misrepresenting or fabricating results is academic dishonesty that can lead to severe consequences.

Sometimes, research yields insignificant or null results.

That's okay!

Misrepresenting or fabricating results is academic dishonesty that can lead to severe consequences.

## **Clear, Precise Interpretation**

Think carefully about what your research finds and say *exactly that*.

# Ethical Failures - Misleading Headlines

February 18, 2023

CALIFORNIA  
GLOBE



Capital One  
Shopping

**Coupon codes found!**  
Capital One Shopping applies codes in seconds.

Apply Codes

 Governor

 Legislature

 Local

 National

 Hollywood

 Opinion



Home > Articles > New CDC Study Finds Majority Of Those Infected With COVID-19 'Always' Wore Masks



Mandatory face mask rules in some Californian cities now come with a fine. (Photo: Youtube)

## New CDC Study Finds Majority of Those Infected with COVID-19 'Always' Wore Masks

*California's BYD mask deal inked with mask data in question*

By [Katy Grimes](#), October 13, 2020 10:41 am

Once again it appears there are conflicting facts, data and plenty of opinions about the efficacy of wearing masks to prevent contracting the Coronavirus.

In addition to causing "maskne" and skin infections on the face and around the mouth, persistent coughing, "mask mouth," and respiratory illnesses including lung infections, it turns out that most everyone infected with COVID-19 "always" wore masks, according to a newly published study by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

**PICK-POCKET PROOF  
TRAVELWEAR YOU WANT**



"The CIA version of khakis." - FORBES

CLOTHING ARTS

GET A WEEKLY SUMMARY OF  
CALIFORNIA GLOBE STORIES:

FOLLOW US

13

# Ethical Failures Wakefield and The Lancet

## Early report

### Ileal-lymphoid-nodular hyperplasia, non-specific colitis, and pervasive developmental disorder in children

A J Wakefield, S H Murch, A Anthony, J Linnell, D M Casson, M Malik, M Berelowitz, A P Dixon, M A Thomson, P Harvey, A Valentine, S E Davies, J A Walker-Smith

#### Summary

**Background** We investigated a consecutive series of children with chronic enterocolitis and regressive developmental disorder.

**Methods** 12 children (mean age 6 years [range 3–10], 11 boys) were referred to a paediatric gastroenterology unit with a history of normal development followed by loss of acquired skills, including language, together with diarrhoea and abdominal pain. Children underwent gastroenterological, neurological and developmental assessment and review of developmental records, ileocolonoscopy and biopsy sampling, magnetic-resonance imaging (MRI), electroencephalography (EEG), and lumbar puncture were done under sedation. Barium follow-through radiography was done where possible. Biochemical, haematological, and immunological profiles were examined.

**Findings** Onset of behavioural symptoms was associated by the parents, with measles, mumps, and rubella vaccination in eight of the 12 children, with measles infection in one (MM), and colitis media in seven. All 12 children had intestinal abnormalities ranging from lymphoid-nodular hyperplasia to pseudo-polyps. Histology showed patchy chronic inflammation and cryptitis in 11 children and reactive ileo-proctocolitis in seven, but no granulomas. Behavioural disorders included autism (nine), disintegrative disorder (one), and a possible postnatal or vaccinal encephalitis (two). There were no focal neurological abnormalities and EEG tests were normal. Abnormal results were also significantly raised urinary methylmalonic acid compared with age-matched controls (mean 2.03), low haemoglobin in four children, and low vitamin B<sub>12</sub> in three children. Intestinal inflammation associated gastrointestinal disease and regressive regression in a group of previously normal children, which was generally associated in time with possible environmental triggers.

Lancet 1998; 351: 637–41

See Commentary page 637

Inflammatory Bowel Disease Study Group, University Departments of Medicine and Radiology (A J Wakefield, S H Murch, A Anthony, J Linnell, M A P Dixon, M A Thomson, S E Davies, M Malik, M Berelowitz, P Harvey, A Valentine, S E Davies, J A Walker-Smith), Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (M Berelowitz), Neurology (P Harvey), and Radiology (A Valentine), Royal Free Hospital and School of Medicine, London NW3 2QG, UK

Correspondence to: Dr A J Wakefield

#### Introduction

We saw several children who, after a period of apparent normality, lost acquired skills, including language. They all had gastroenterological symptoms, including abdominal pain, diarrhoea, and, in some cases, food intolerance. We describe the clinical findings, and gastroenterological features of these children.

#### Patients and methods

12 children, consecutive referrals to the department of paediatric gastroenterology, had a history of a pervasive developmental disorder with loss of acquired skills and intestinal symptoms, including abdominal pain, bloating and food intolerance, were investigated. All children were admitted to the ward directly, screened by their parents.

#### Parent investigations

Each parent, including details of immunisations and measles to infectious diseases, and assessed the children. In 11 children, history was obtained by the senior clinician (PW-S). Non-invasive psychiatric assessments were done by paediatric staff (MH, MD) with MM-i criteria. Developmental records included a review of prospective developmental records from parents, health visitors, and general practitioners. Four children did not undergo psychiatric assessment in hospital; all had been assessed professionally elsewhere, in those assessments were used as the basis for their behavioral diagnosis.

After bowel preparation, ileocolonoscopy was performed by STM or MAT under sedation with midazolam and pethidine. Paired tissue and formalin-fixed mucosal biopsy samples were taken from the terminal ileum, ascending, transverse, descending, and sigmoid colon, and from the rectum. The procedure was recorded by video or still images, and were compared with images of the previous seven consecutive paediatric colonoscopies (their normal colonoscopies and those in children with ulcerative colitis), in which the physician reported normal appearances in the terminal ileum. Barium follow-through radiography was possible in some cases.

After under sedation, contrast magnetic-resonance imaging (MRI), electroencephalography (EEG) including visual, brain stem auditory, and sensory evoked potentials (where compliance made these possible), and lumbar puncture were done.

#### Laboratory investigations

Thyroid function, serum long-chain fatty acids, and cerebrospinal-fluid lactate were measured to exclude known causes of childhood neurodegenerative disease. Urinary methylmalonic acid was measured in random urine samples from eight of the 12 children and 14 age-matched and sex-matched normal controls, by a modification of a technique described previously.<sup>1</sup> Chromatograms were scanned digitally on computer, to analyse the methylmalonic acid peak area and controls. Urinary methylmalonic acid concentrations in patients and controls were compared by a one-sample *t* test. Urinary creatinine was estimated by routine spectrophotometric assay.

Children were screened for antinuclear antibodies and bery were screened for fragile-X if they had not been done

- Dr. Andrew Wakefield et al. published paper in 1998
- claimed pathway MMR → colitis → autism
- Lancet retracted article in 2010 (Eggertson, 2010)

## Research and AI

---

Use of generative AI consumes a massive amount of energy - both in training and utilization.

## **Estimated Impact**

“Researchers have estimated that a ChatGPT query consumes about five times more electricity than a simple web search.” (Zewe, 2025)

# Recommendations

## EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

Member States should provide adequate AI literacy education to the public, including awareness programmes on data. In doing so, the participation of marginalised groups should be prioritised. Member States should also encourage research initiatives on ethical AI.

## BREAKTHROUGH PROVISION

### Ethics skills

In the Recommendation, AI ethics, communication and teamwork skills are recognised as priorities alongside other widely recognised skills such as basic literacy, numeracy, coding and digital skills.

- do not have AI write your papers
- always disclose any use of AI
- always double-check all work