

# Research Scenarios and Ethical Red Flags



Whenever there is an ethical red flag for a given scenario based on the requirements listed by Emanuel, Wendler, & Grady (2000), draw a flag in the box. The flag means further ethical scrutiny is called for, and the scenario presents something ethically problematic.

Scenarios	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A							
B							
C							
D							

Other ethical concerns or notes

A:

B:

C:

D:

## Ethical Requirements

- 1 **Social or scientific value**
- 2 **Scientific validity**
- 3 **Fair subject selection**
- 4 **Favorable risk-benefit ratio**
- 5 **Independent review**
- 6 **Informed consent**
- 7 **Respect for potential and enrolled subjects**

## Scenarios

- A. Research proposal: Collecting tissue samples from subjects for a biobank (anonymized repository of human tissues and DNA for future research purposes) with the intention (among others) of using the tissue in a planned study that involves non-human animals. The consent form for the tissue collection says nothing about the animal study.
- B. Research proposal: Researchers want to test a probiotic yogurt on small children, though their methodology is not considered rigorous, and according to the IRB (institutional review board), the researchers are replicating earlier studies for no purpose besides padding their CV.
- C. A physician has collected data from patient records over the past year, anonymizing them and placing the data in a spreadsheet on her work computer. The physician did not ask for consent from her patients, since she perceived no harm in what she did, and she also did not seek IRB approval, since she believed this did not truly count as “experimenting” on human subjects.
- D. A group of researchers received a federal grant to study medical countermeasures against anthrax, particularly in pediatric populations. In order to increase recruitment for their experimental drug, they send out advertisements to military families, urging that parents consent for their children and serve their country as their patriotic duty.