

Ethical Issues in Research and Clinical Trials

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1. Introduction

- Research ethics govern how studies involving humans are designed and conducted.
- They protect participants while allowing valuable scientific knowledge to advance.

2. Foundational Principles

- **Respect for persons:** honouring autonomy and protecting vulnerable groups.
- **Beneficence:** maximising benefits and minimising harm.
- **Justice:** fair selection of participants and distribution of benefits.

3. Informed Consent

- Participants must understand the purpose, risks, and benefits before agreeing.
- Consent must be voluntary, with the right to withdraw at any time.

4. Trial Safeguards

- Ethics committees or review boards approve and monitor studies.
- Randomisation, control groups, and equipoise must be ethically justified.
- Confidentiality of participant data must be maintained.

5. Common Ethical Concerns

- Exploitation of vulnerable or poor populations.
- Conflicts of interest and pressure to produce favourable results.
- Ensuring participants in trials gain access to proven treatments.

6. Summary

- Research ethics ensure science respects human dignity and safety.
- Informed consent and independent review are central safeguards.