

Understanding ethical research



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Psychological experiments for research in modern society requires following ethical guidelines. This is based off the Belmont Report written by the National Commission for the Protection of Human Services of Biomedical and Behavioral Research legally stated on 18th of April 1979. These guidelines include informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, voluntary participation, debriefing and avoiding physical and mental harm. In historical psychological experiments it went against these guidelines. Examples include the David Reimer experiment, in which a sex change created identity crisis leading to suicide and the ' Monster Study', with negative reinforcement making children insecure. An unethical psychological experiment included ' The Monster Study', conducted by speech expert Wendell Johnson in 1939. Theories predicted stuttering was genetic, however Dr Johnson believed speech criticism could cause a stutter. He split 22 orphans into two with a mixture of stutters and non-stutters. One group were given positive reinforcement speech therapy, told ' to keep talking' and the other group were given negative reinforcement speech therapy and told to talk ' when they could get it right'. No evidence ended to impact a stutter gain. Arthur Caplan, (Head of the University of Pennsylvania Bioethics Center) states, " This experiment has unethical aspects illegal today". Firstly, no consent was given by evaluation to the orphanage leaders and children were forced. They were not debriefed or told they were being deceived with degradation. It left them with the harm of psychological insecurities from which Tudor (1939, pp10- 11) told them " Don't ever speak unless you can do it right." for six months. Dan Collins (CBSNews, 2003) states " Nixon, now 76, and other patients are suing for lifelong psychological problems." Mary Tudor also proved the impact, noting 5-year-old Norma, " was difficult to get to speak", <https://assignbuster.com/understanding-ethical-research/>

and Hazel 15, “ became self-conscious and talked less”. Without debriefing and the practice of infants deceived by adult reinforcement with degradation there vulnerability would have learnt negativity. This experiment could controversially be recon- ducted. Adults degrading children for six months can teach psychological harm. Instead a day experiment, without degradation, instead telling them they have a stutter and debriefing the children in an understandable way after, of being deceived could replace this. Proper consent would also be vital.

Another unethical psychological experimentation was the ‘ David Reimer Case’. Born in 1965, at 8 months a circumcision operation with an electro-cautery needle burned off his penis. They were referred to psychologist Dr John Money who recommended a sex change into a girl, also developing an experiment on nurture, not nature determining gender identity. It was the act of Bruce, becoming Brenda deceived and raised as a girl. However, this became psychologically damaging for the family. Brenda always displayed masculinity and was manipulated to think it was a phase. At thirteen Bruce became suicidal feeling he was a boy. His mother (Janet Reider), stated, “ She was very masculine, I couldn’t persuade femininity, she was ridiculed, lonely and unhappy”. This lead Janet into guilt suicide, alcoholism by their father and his twin brother into drugs. At age 14, he was told about originally being male and had a sex change back and became David, however Thedaily mail (2010) reported “ He discovered the experiment was classed ‘ successful’ on gender reassignment – and it was a roadmap for raising boys in similar circumstances” as deceiving wrong analysis and debrief. This lead to the twin’s suicides at age 38. All of this was due to degradation into

forcing someone into a gender identity. Forcible public experimentation without proper consent, also lead to psychological affects.

(Samanthakatepsychology, 2012) states “ Reimer’s parents were deceived by Money, never told of his intentions and led to believe a sex change was the only option.” Polly Carmichael of (Great Ormand Street Hospital) describes “ Money’s singular, God-like control would not be allowed to happen today”. In new discoveries of gender identity equality, this experiment would not be allowed today. It is the right of people to determine their own identity. We can see from the suicidal actions of several of the family members that it did severe psychological damage and recon- ducting this experiment would be unethical. In conclusion these two experiments are historical representations of unethical actions and their effects on a person involved. Ethical guidelines now aim to prevent these effects. It is important to inform consent not force, confidentiality and anonymity rather than present patients publicly, voluntary participation rather than force, debrief with evaluation and analysis with no results being incorrect or altered and to be told if deception was used and avoid any physical or mental harm. Do not degrade or inflict violence.

750 words.

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