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Ethics Principles

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Morality and Ethics

- What is morality?
 - The lived moral rules of a particular community
 - May differ across communities
 - Particularly social rules that affect interests of *other* people

Morality and Ethics

- What is ethics?
 - The study/examination of morality; of what ought to be moral rules
 - ▶ Descriptive
 - ▶ Normative

Morality and Ethics

- What is ethical theory?
 - Philosophical theories giving reasons or justifications for/against a system of morality
 - Leads to a series of principles to follow in acting morally, that create moral obligations

Examples of Ethical Theories

- Utilitarianism: An action is right that leads to the greatest balance of good over bad consequences
- Deontology: An action is right (or wrong) in and of itself

Principles of Biomedical Ethics

- From *The Belmont Report*
 - Beneficence
 - Respect for persons/respect for autonomy
 - Justice

How Principles Apply to Research: Beneficence

- Risks/benefits to individuals and communities
 - Physical
 - Psychological
 - Social

How Principles Apply to Research: Beneficence

- Risks/benefits to individuals and communities
 - Physical
 - Psychological
 - Social
- Must minimize risks
- Must balance risks and benefits
- Study design is relevant to risks/benefits
 - Randomization, placebos, control groups
 - Sample size considerations
 - Observational vs. randomized, controlled trial

Respect for Persons

- Informed consent
- Respect for privacy, protection of confidential data

Justice

- Fair selection of individuals
- Fair selection of populations
- Opposite of justice is exploitation
- Do communities and individuals feel like their participation was “fair”?