

# Principles of Good Research

The following factors are common to all good pieces of research

- There is a clear statement of research aims, which defines the research question.
- There is an information sheet for participants, which sets out clearly what the research is about, what it will involve and consent is obtained in writing on a consent form prior to research beginning.
- The methodology is appropriate to the research question. So, if the research is into people's perceptions, a more qualitative, unstructured interview may be appropriate. If the research aims to identify the scale of a problem or need, a more quantitative, randomised, statistical sample survey may be more appropriate. Good research can often use a combination of methodologies, which complement one another.

## Principles of Good Research (con.)

- The research should be carried out in an unbiased fashion. As far as possible the researcher should not influence the results of the research in any way. If this is likely, it needs to be addressed explicitly and systematically.
- From the beginning, the research should have appropriate and sufficient resources in terms of people, time, transport, money etc. allocated to it.
- The people conducting the research should be trained in research and research methods and this training should provide:
  - Knowledge around appropriate information gathering techniques.
  - An understanding of research issues.
  - An understanding of the research area

## Principles of Good Research (con.)

- Those involved in designing, conducting, analysing and supervising the research should have a full understanding of the subject area.
- In some instances, it helps if the researcher has experience of working in the area. However, this can also be a negative factor, as sometimes research benefits from the fresh eyes and ears of an outsider, which may lead to less bias.
- All research should be ethical and not harmful in any way to the participants.

**1. There should be a clear research question and purpose.**

Any research proposal should have a clear, unambiguous question it intends to answer and / or a purpose it aims to fulfil. These are its proposed benefits which are balanced against its possible harms.



**2. The study should be built on what is known already.**

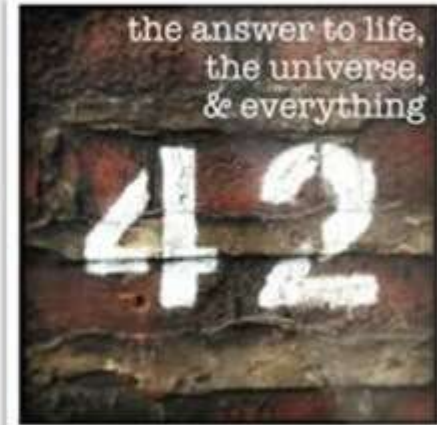
Repetition can be justified (indeed it 's a principle of modern science) but patients and participants have suffered or money wasted when studies have unjustifiably repeated prior work.



**Shifting sands**

### 3. The study should be meaningful.

The questions should have relevance while the method should be able to provide answers of value.



**4. The method should be able to provide valid data and answers to the research question.**

We should be able to trust derived data and answers (or have an estimate of their validity) for the research to have any value.



**5. This should be the best method to answer the question.**

There may be alternatives. The scientific and ethical quality of each must be considered and compared, especially if there are concerns about the original proposal.

"It's the salmon John West rejects that makes John West the best."



"He never got over being rejected by John West."

CartoonStock.com

**6. The research team should be equipped to complete the study.**

The work should be conducted by those with necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes with appropriate monitoring and accountability.



**Tools to hand  
to help  
evaluate the  
research  
(team)**

Click here to  
move on

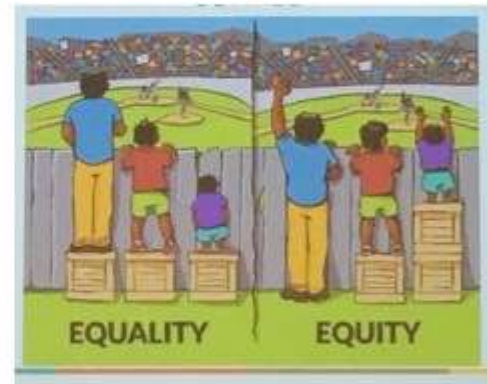
**7. The research should incorporate public, patient and participant views from its inception.**

We should see research as a partnership in which all with fair interest have fair voice.



**8. Participants should be selected and recruited fairly.**

The benefits and burdens of research should be fairly shared.



**9. There should be fair balance of benefits and harms for all with an interest in the study.**

This is at the centre of design and review. Assessment should be realistic (evidence based as far as possible), inclusive and proportionate.



**10. Participants should be offered a fair choice (informed consent).**

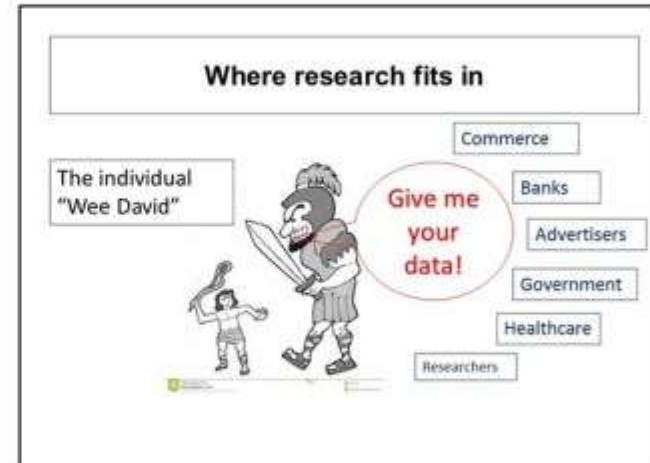
Consent procedures should ensure the potential participants are able to consider their own interests and make up their own minds.



**Hobson's choice**

## 11. Personal data should be handled appropriately (confidentiality)

Access to personal data must be balanced against privacy. Agreed “rules of engagement” are thus essential to build trust between all involved.



**12. There should be fair reimbursement, payment for participation.**

As a concept, payment is accepted but shouldn't represent undue influence.

Those who join research shouldn't be out of pocket.

**Fair payment?**

**13. There should be fair recompense for injury.**

When appropriate, compensation arrangements should be in place.

**Fair payment  
if injured?**

**14. Once the study is finished participants should receive acknowledgement and, when relevant, appropriate care.**

Of particular relevance in clinical research.

- Acknowledging the participant's contribution.
- Appropriate dissemination of findings and results.
- Providing care after clinical research.



**15. The project should be registered and results placed in the public domain.**

Results are valueless otherwise, research is of no benefit and hence likely unethical.



**MUCK – no good unless it's spread**

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