

## **Statistics Project—Ethics in Healthcare**

**The Problem:** There are many difficult ethical questions in healthcare. When the answers to one of these questions are consistent across all segments of our society then we have a strategy for resolving whatever issue is involved. For other healthcare problems, the medical community may disagree with the legal community, or the doctors and patients may have conflicting views, or efforts to cut costs may conflict with healthcare workers effectiveness, etc. This project attempts to measure disagreement on healthcare issues between different groups. This study does not expect to answer these ethical questions, but rather looks at estimating the level of disagreement on them. In some sense the degree of dissimilarity of opinions is a proxy for how difficult the issues may be to resolve.

**Study Outline:** For each ethical dilemma determine which populations should be sampled. One group should always be healthcare professionals or future healthcare professionals. Depending on the question posed, some possible polling divisions are-- men versus women, older versus younger, religious versus non-religious, nurses versus patients, etc. Work your survey instrument to address all of the important survey issues discussed in chapter 8 of the Moore text.

**Collecting Issues:** Gather a pool of ethical questions by interviewing the head of the nursing program at SWC, a lawyer specializing in medical malpractice, and Google.

Some obvious ethical choice questions:

Should nurses be allowed to strike?

What to do if next of kin request heroic measures that are unjustified or contrary to a patient's interests/requests?

Should genetic information be released to insurance companies?

Should genetic/medical information be released to affected/endangered third parties?

Should medical/genetic information be provided when the anticipated reactions of the receiver will be unethical or illegal?

To what level should government provide healthcare?

**Getting Started:** Try out a sample of ethical issues on several people to get an idea of which one will be the most interesting, controversial, or important. Experiment with different wordings of the same question.

**First Meeting:** Prior to the meeting do the "Getting Started" exercise. Meet with your instructor and explain your project. With your instructor's assistance, determine the following—which questions to include, which populations to study, what sample size to use, what sampling strategy to adopt, and what could go wrong. Write a summary of this meeting and turn it in to the instructor.

**Construct the Instrument:** Based on the decisions from the First Meeting make up a list of ethical questions. Experiment with this list of questions until you have some intuition as to how this experiment is going to go. Write the specific wording of the

survey questions. Be sure to consider the survey issues discussed in chapter 8 of the Moore textbook.

**Second Meeting:** Present your instrument to the instructor and describe your protocol for administering the survey. Determine what measure(s) of accuracy to use, refine your sample size, and decide how to tabulate the data. Write a summary of this meeting and turn it in to the instructor.

**Collect Data and Compute Statistics:** You should end up with a table of test results and a table of statistics based on the test results.

**Third Meeting:** Present your results. If there are problems with the survey procedures resolve them and survey again. Discuss what conclusions are justified. Discuss every section of the project report and what should be there.

**Write Project Report Draft:** Use guidance from the Third Meeting to write your draft report.

**Fourth Meeting:** Present your draft report to the instructor. Use your instructor's critique to write the final report.

**Write the Project Report.**

Additional Project Guidelines:

Due Dates

[Report Format](#)

[Report Writing Cautions.](#)