Supervising Research Teams to Ensure Ethical Practices

James M. DuBois, DSc, PhD

Director
PI Program / Center for Clinical and Research Ethics
Department of Medicine





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Background

- Serious or persistent noncompliance and research integrity violations cause serious problems
- Even good researchers can find research programs frozen if they do not practices good habit
- Researchers are generally trained to do research, not how to lead and manage research teams

Understanding Root Causes of Serious Noncompliance: Our Approaches

- 1. Studied more than 100 cases of violations in research
- 2. Surveyed nearly 1,000 NIH-funded researchers to examine:
 - Ethical decision-making / Values / Role of Culture / Attitudes / Knowledge of Rules
- 3. Pre- and Post-testing of PI Program participants (sent for remediation)
- 4. Interviewed 52 Research Exemplars to understand good research practices (Antes, PI, K01)

Root Causes of Persistent Noncompliance (n=39). (Nature paper)

WHY RESEARCHERS STUMBLED

Instructors on the Professionalism and Integrity Program assessed underlying causes (often more than one) for researchers' lapses.

Proximate cause	Ultimate cause of researcher lapse	% of participants
Lack of attention	Overextended, not detail-oriented or distracted by personal problems.	72 %
Unsure of rules	An increase in regulations since researcher began career, lack of mentoring or cultural differences.	56 %
Did not prioritze compliance	Failed to recognize seriousness of violations, biased thinking or cultural differences.	56 %
Relationship problems, political tensions	Communicated aggressively or worked with difficult personalities.	36 %
Staff lacked adequate training or integrity	Failed to provide adequate training, did not create culture of compliance in lab or had difficulty hiring individuals.	28%

Root Causes of Persistent Noncompliance

Poor communication	Failed to hold regular meetings with research team.	1111111111111111111111111111111111111
Ambition	Driven personality, desire for promotion or competition for funding.	11 11 11 11 11 11 21%
Conflicting roles (physician–scientist)	Interacted with individuals as both patients and research participants.	21%
Did not anticipate consequences	Failed to consider ways a project could go wrong.	11 11 11 11 11 11 11 13%
Lack of resources	Inadequate institutional investment in researcher's programme.	•••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••
Followed poor instructions	Rigid hierarchy in research programme and the absence of positive mentors to consult.	10 %

PI Program Approach

We try to address root causes of lapses in research compliance and integrity by addressing:

- Attitudes
- Decision-making strategies
- Work habits

Attitudes: We Foster Acceptance

- Compliance <u>can be</u> unreasonable and burdensome
- But its important to protect:
 - Institutions & self
 - Sometimes participants & public
- Accept it



Good Decision-making Strategies

See SMART Strategies Handout

Seek help

Manage emotions

Anticipate consequences

Recognize rules

Test assumptions

Good Work Habits

See handout on good lab leadership and management practices

In your own research program, which practices in each category do you think you most urgently want to adopt?

- 1. Management practices
- Leadership practices
- General work habits

Q&A

Lab website:

www.professionalandsocial.org

PI Program website:

www.integrityprogram.org

Email:

duboisjm@wustl.edu