

National University of Singapore



Singapore's
Global
University

EDUCATION IN RESEARCH BIOETHICS

Prof. Leonardo D. de Castro, Ph.D.



Can Ethics Be Taught?

by Derek C. Bok

NO – IT DOES NOT PAY

“According to one instructor, ‘Students seem to see things in cost/benefit terms. Will the lie serve a good policy? What are the chances of getting caught? If you get caught, how much will it hurt you?’”

NO – IT GETS IN THE WAY OF RESULTS

Medicine That Can't Wait

UHS | Sep 23, 2011 | 0min:30sec

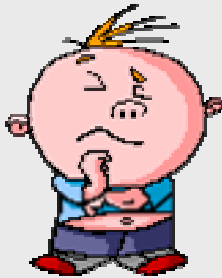
NO – IT HINDERS RESEARCH

Sounding Board

ARE RESEARCH ETHICS BAD FOR OUR MENTAL HEALTH?

PATIENTS with mental illness are much
off now than they were only a few decades
ago. Diagnostic methods are more reliable, and

Ethics Education



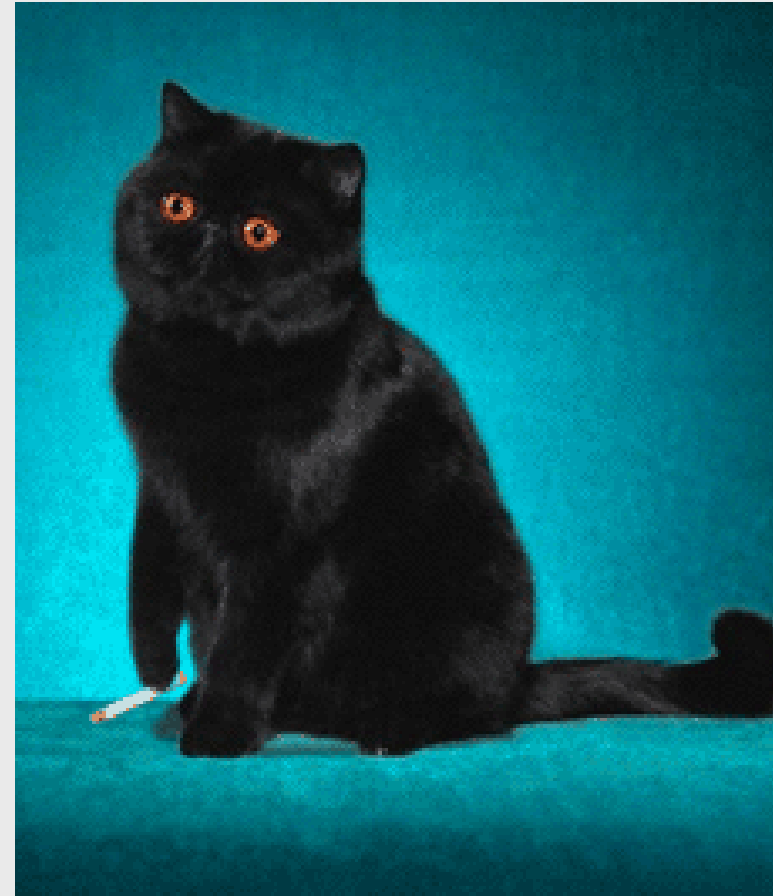
- **As much about developing virtuous character as about determining the correct thing to do under certain circumstances**

Why teach children early?

Make up for our own mistakes

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Make up for our own mistakes



Why teach children early?

- We close our eyes when children learn to do cruel things to their research frogs or mice
- We urge them to hit two birds with one stone
- It's OK, when you know the results in advance, to manipulate your "findings" to match the correct results



Why teach children early?

It may be too late to correct their mistakes
when they are older

- **Frustrations in teaching ethics to medical students**
 - Too late to change character
 - Difficult to test effectiveness of ethics teaching in college

Confidence in Capability of Children

- **Philosophy for/with children**
 - Community of inquiry
 - Protocols for respectful discourse
- **Children already confronted with scenarios in movies and news accounts**
- **Learning by playing versus by being taught**

The Script

- The author
- Feedback on draft
- Preview performance
- Unrealistic scenarios could confuse

Engagement with schools

- **Limited window of opportunity**
 - Science teaching
 - Play also for non-science classes

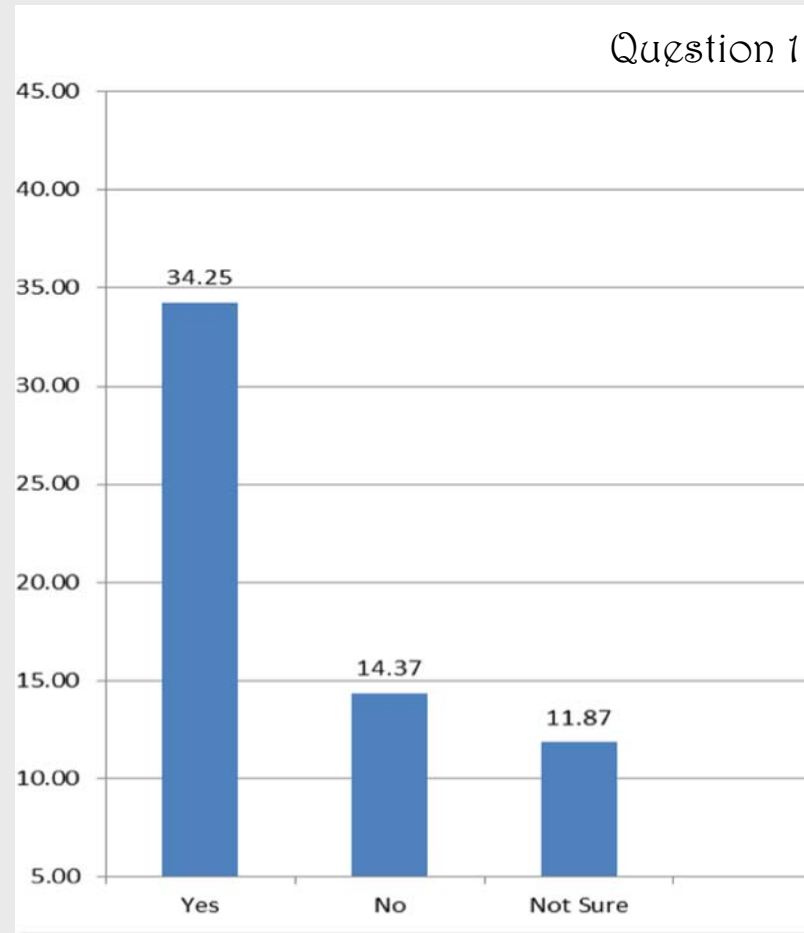
The idiot's guide to biomedical research

- Protocols for dummies
- Informed consent for dummies

Question 1

If one of your classmates earns better marks in school after taking memory enhancing pills, do you think s/he would be cheating?

Yes, No or Not Sure?



*Figures derived from the average of 8 schools

Common Responses

- Not using own natural ability
- Similar to using steroids in sports
- Cheating
- Should be available to everyone
- No efforts put in
- Not considered natural
- Unfair method to score well

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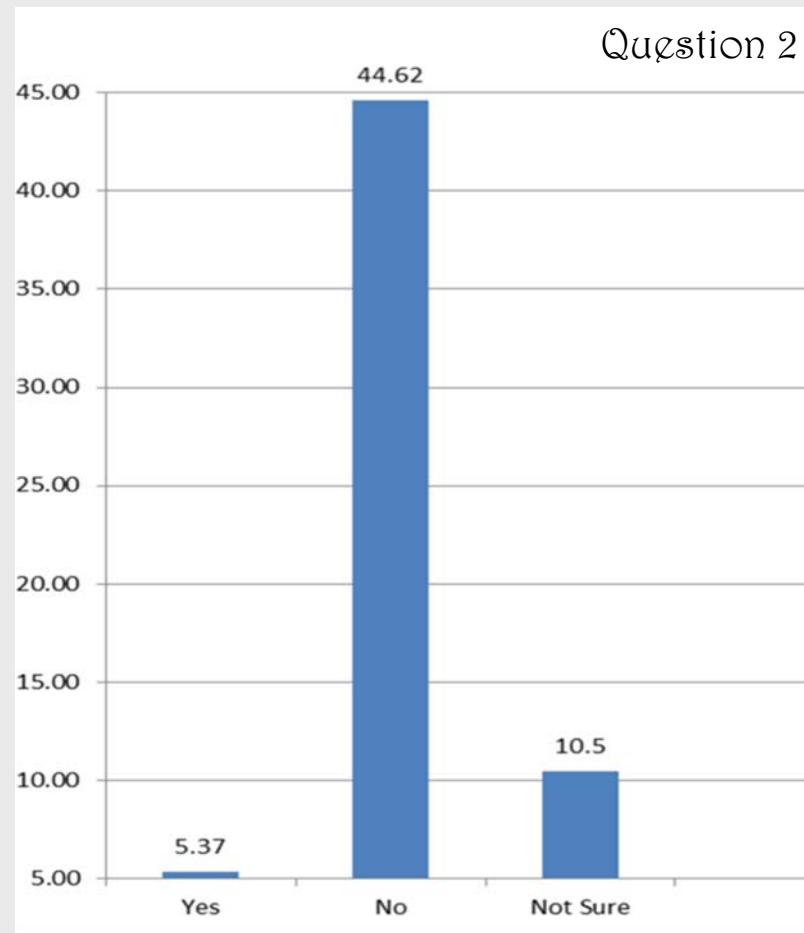
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- Not cheating as only enhance memory, not intelligence or understanding of topics.
- Still require studying
- Not copying answers
- Personal choice if able to afford
- Similar to eating tonics
- Everyone have their own method to success
- Memory is not the only source of intelligence
- Using own knowledge, did study despite good memory
- Memory is not everything in exam

Question 2

If you could take a serum
to make you live forever,
would you?

Yes, No or Not Sure?



*Figures derived from the average of 8 schools

Common Responses

- Wish to see the future world and use my knowledge to help people
- Able to contribute more to the society
- Able to achieve more goals
- We can learn more and experience more
- Able to do what others can't

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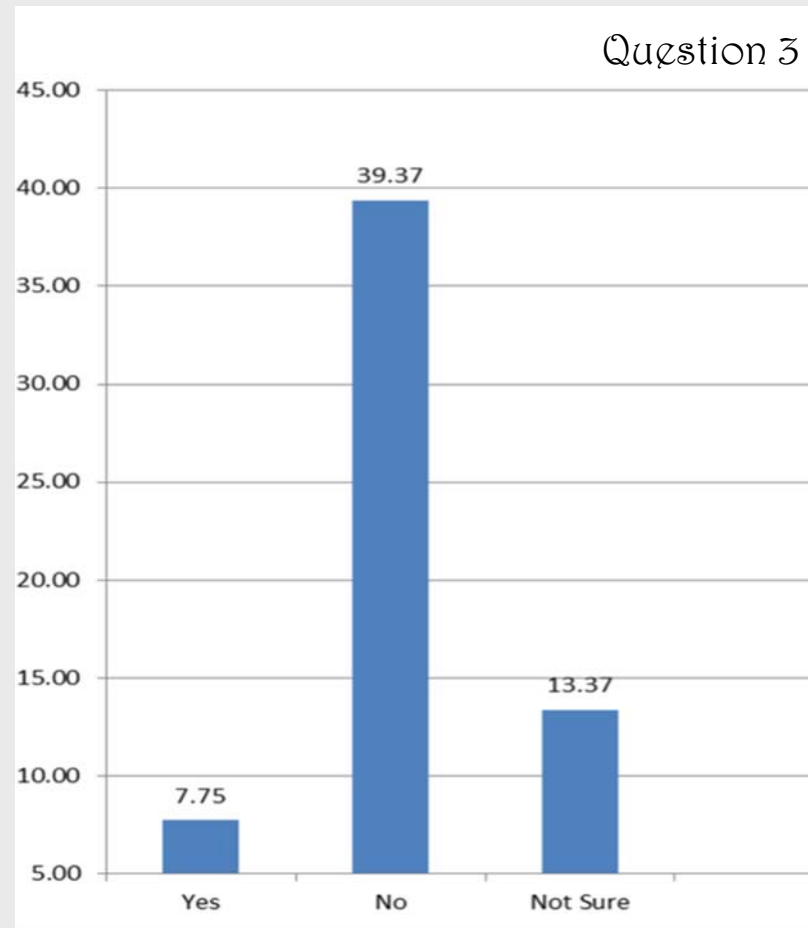
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- Boring, tiring physically and mentally
- meaningless and lonely
- Against nature
- Torturing to see family and friends die
- Eternal life doesn't mean happy life
- World, people and things will change
- Life is all about living to the fullest within the limited lifespan
- Won't cherish life if live forever
- We'll reach a point when we're tired of living
- Don't want to defy nature
- Will cause overpopulation

Question 3

If your parents told you that they were going to have a designer baby as your brother and that they wanted him to be tall, handsome and intelligent, would you support them?

Yes, No or Not Sure?



*Figures derived from the average of 8 schools

Common Responses

- Man-made, not gift from God, unnatural
- Treasure what GOD gave us
- Lose the sense of family if certain traits are removed
- Sad and jealous if he is smarter than me
- Babies will lose uniqueness
- Manufacturing robots, not making babies
- Weird and abnormal
- Have to accept whatever traits or genes passed down by parents
- Will have discrimination
- Don't want him to look down on others
- Science should not allow people to play GOD

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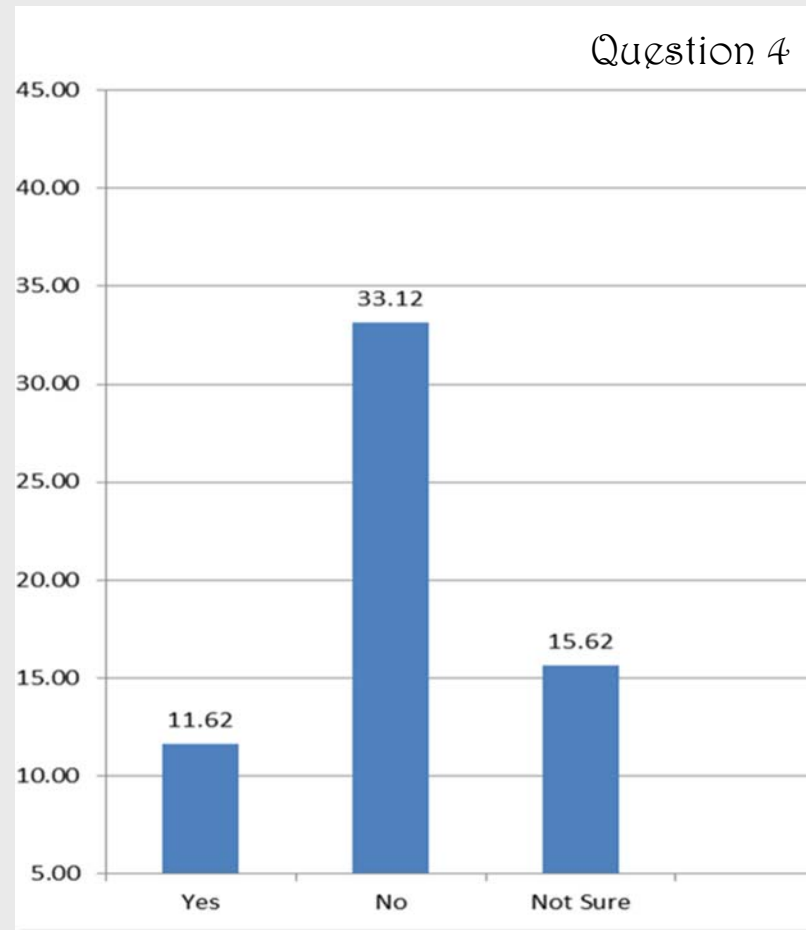
- As long as it for his good, I'm ok
- As long as he can contribute to the society
- Cool to have a perfect brother to help me with my problems
- No matter what he is still my brother
- Why not?
- As long as the baby is healthy
- Would be proud to have a perfect brother
- Lesser disease, brighter future

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Question 4

If your mother had kidney failure, would it be fair if she could not get a new one made from stem cells because your family could not afford it?

Yes, No or Not Sure?



*Figures derived from the average of 8 schools

Common Responses

- Death is inevitable and a natural process if no donor and can't afford
- Already an existing problem, lots of poor can't afford treatment
- Only can blame our own financial status
- Its means no one in the family is willing to donate their own kidney, its their own fault
- If we can't afford the treatment, its time for us to go

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- Money should not be the factor depriving a life being saved
- Health benefits should be available to all
- Life should be more important than money
- The poor should get equal treatment
- Technological improvement is supposed to help everyone, not just the rich
- Since its to benefit people, why make it so expensive?
- Only the rich deserves to be treated?

What do you think?

