

1. Importance of ethics in research
2. The question is an important one as this whole course is based on the assumption and belief that ethics is an important part of good research practice. As a basis for this presentation, I have chosen to follow the reasoning by David B Resnik in his article from 2011 on why ethics is an integral part of good research practice. If you are interested in Resnik's short article, the link to it is below. We are going to look at the role of ethics from six different perspectives:
 - a. how ethics and aims of research are linked
 - b. how ethics promotes research cooperation
 - c. accountability is an essential part of research work and ethics has a role to play in shaping that
 - d. trust is a baseline for research and ethics supports development of trust
 - e. ethics helps align research values
 - f. and ethical guidelines assist in building integrity
3. So let's start with aims. Ethics can be understood as ethical norms, which are essentially guidelines for behaviour. There is a widespread agreement that research aims include important research values of knowledge, truth, and avoidance of error. Just imagine how we could promote knowledge or truth if it was ok to invent research data or manipulate data to suit our research aims. When we follow ethical norms for research, we also promote these aims of research, there is a direct alignment.
4. Secondly, research is rarely done by individuals alone. Research is by its very nature a collective activity, which increasingly involves extensive cooperation and coordination between individuals, across disciplines, between different institutions and across different countries.
5. This complex and essential cooperation and collaboration is meaningful in relation to the aims of research only when it is based on trust, accountability, mutual respect and fairness. Many ethical norms and considerations are important as they promote these values.
6. Stop and imagine what collaborative research work would look like without guidelines on authorship, agreements on data sharing, confidentiality rules in peer review?
7. No one wants to cooperate if they need to fear for their ideas being stolen or being denied credit for their contribution. Ethical guidelines are designed to create a space for most productive collaboration to promote the key aims of research: knowledge, truth and improving the world we live in.
8. Thirdly, research is accountable to the public and ethical norms around misconduct promote accountability. This is not only accountability for funding purposes, as the it is fair and reasonable that public funds are used appropriately, but also accountable for the accuracy and value of the research outcomes shared with the public for implementation and understanding.

9. Therefore policies on misconduct, conflict of interest, and protecting both human and animal subjects are an important aspect of ethical framework to make the research enterprise possible and meaningful for the society.
10. Fourth, not only is ethical research likely to increase accountability, it is also likely to help build trust in research. When we have appropriate policies in place, processes to share results, norms to collaborate and interact with our research subjects and we remain transparent about the process of research we create trust.
11. Trust in research can translate into increased research funding as well as more effective transfer of research knowledge into practice.
12. Fifth, research norms are not something independent and totally unique to research. They are in fact closely aligned with many social norms and promote important values in society. We can see a clear alignment for example with ethical norms and social responsibility, compliance with law as well as human rights and animal rights. Research is part of society and it is essential its norms are aligned with the ones in the society as well.
13. If research does not follow ethical norms, it can significantly harm human and animal subjects, students, and the public. Where there is such potential power, there must also be equal amount of responsibility.
14. Finally, a researcher working in a manner that can pass the daylight test of not having to hide how research is done and the nighttime test of being able to sleep soundly without worry and guilt is likely to be a happy and productive researcher. Integrity in research work benefits the individual as well as the the collective.
15. So these are the key elements why ethics is an integral part of research work - the alignment of aims, the support for cooperation, promoting accountability, developing trust, alignment with values and ensuring integrity.
16. Ethics can also be seen to create a protective framework for research, where it guards for the internal functioning of research work through collaboration, it protects the subjects of research and promotes positive transfer of research knowledge into the public sphere.