

To earn full credit for Journal 1, you must choose 1 of the following five options.

Option 1

Read the “Conquering Polio” article from the Smithsonian magazine (links and PDF available on Moodle). Use two of the following questions to guide your response—Question 1 is mandatory, but you may choose either Question 2 or Question 3.

1. The article mentions several "causes" of polio, including mosquitoes, ice cream cones, and sunburn. All three of these are linked to a confounding factor—what do you think that factor is?
2. This article discusses several types of data collection, including anecdotal evidence, observational studies, and experiments. What do you think is a good use of anecdotal evidence in the article? Observational studies? Experiments?
3. What do you think of the ethics of the different studies? For instance, why does it matter that the first human subjects had already contracted polio? Why does it matter that Bill Kirkpatrick, the first patient to be given the vaccine, was asked if it was okay to proceed?

Option 2 (Topic: Coronavirus)

Read the “U.K. Preparing COVID-19 Vaccine Trials That Deliberately Expose Study Subjects” article from NPR (links and PDF available on Moodle).

1. The article describes a special type of trial called a "challenge trial". What are the additional ethical concerns in a challenge trial? In what ways is this trial similar or different from the trial described in Question 1?
2. Would you participate in a challenge trial? Would you encourage a friend or family member to participate in a trial? Why or why not?

Option 3 (Topic: Coronavirus, Communities of Color)

Read the “Moderna slows coronavirus vaccine trial enrollment to ensure minority representation, CEO says” article from CNBC (links and PDF available on Moodle).

1. What type of sampling are the investigators trying to use in this trial—stratified sampling, or cluster sampling? How can you tell?
2. What are the benefits and disadvantages of promoting minority enrollment? What are the additional ethical concerns?

Option 4

Find a dataset about yourself (similar to the dataset I used from Goodreads in class). Describe the dataset, including the number of observations and the number and type of variables, as well as what insight you can gain about yourself.

Option 5

Find a news article that relates to a topic we discussed in class and write a brief paragraph on why you think it relates to this week's material.