

---

# Ethical decision-making in research: Identifying all competing interests

Commentary on "Six Domains of Research Ethics" (K.D. Pimple)

Michael Kalichman, *University of California, San Diego*

---

Descriptions of ethical decision-making typically begin with the challenge to identify all interested parties (e.g. ref. 2). The proposed list of responsibilities can be a checklist for any such discussion. In short, ethical decision-making by a responsible researcher would begin with reviewing the proposed list of domains of responsibility to be sure that all potential interests have been identified. For each case in which an interest has been identified, the consequences of a given course of action could be measured by answers to the questions: *What are the benefits, what are the costs, and what are the risks?*

**Table 1.** Competing interests: Responsibilities and questions to be considered for ethical decision-making in research

<b>Responsibilities</b>
To the research
To the subjects of research
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Human subjects</li> <li>• Animal subjects</li> </ul>
To other researchers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trainees</li> <li>• Collaborators</li> <li>• Peers</li> </ul>
To the institution
To society
To the environment
To self
<b>Questions</b>
What are the benefits?
What are the costs?
What are the risks?