

I'm a Psy.D student at the University of Hartford. I am doing my dissertation on Resiliency in Children of Alcoholics. My study is simple, I am asking college students to complete the Michigan Alcoholism Screening Test, the Resiliency Attitude Scale, and a Demographic Questionnaire. It's a very straightforward study looking at what characteristics help COAs to not become adult alcoholics. I wanted to collect my data at a local community college (Dutchess Community College) in Poughkeepsie, NY, because I felt that that the diversity in age and ethnicity would make this a good backdrop for data collection. When I contacted DCC about their IRB, no one seemed to know when they met, who ran the committee, etc. I finally got in touch with the chairperson, who was newly appointed (a Spanish instructor). After at least 2 month of sending materials back and forth, they outright denied my request, stating that if people "realized" they had a drinking problem by answering the questions, then this puts people at risk (HUH???), even though there was referral information and discussion of potential risks and benefits on the Informed Consent. They did not suggest that I make any changes in order to make my study more acceptable to them, and when they sent me the denial letter they did not say specifically why they denied me. Through my back and forth e-mails with the chairman, it was apparent to me that they had no idea what ethical research meant, and despite several offers to come and meet with them, they declined and continued to discuss my study with a clear lack of understanding.

Needless to say, I have had to move on to another institution to collect my data, wasting precious time and energy in my efforts to complete my degree and put out a worthwhile study. I believe DCC made a huge mistake in their ignorance and as a result missed a golden opportunity to permit a good study to be conducted with their students.

I just wanted to share my story of how an uneducated, unprofessional IRB turned away a sound study under the auspices that they were protecting students, when they clearly did not understand what that means.