Case Study
from *Responsible Conduct of Research*

• Dr. Z is mentoring a “promising” medical student over the summer in his research lab

• Student’s project
  – cancer cell line that requires 3 weeks to grow in order to test for a specific antibody
  – the student has already written a short paper on his work

• Dr. Z’s dilemma:
  – after going over the raw data, some data were on pieces of yellow pads without clear identification from which experiment the data came
  – some of the experiments were repeated several times without explanation as to way
  – she is not happy about the data, but doesn’t want to discourage him to pursue a career in research

• What is the primary responsibility of the mentor?

• Should the mentor write a short paper and send it for publication?

• Should the student write a short paper and send it for publication?

• If you were the mentor, what would you do?
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Drs. K and W are conducting a NIH-funded long-term (25 years), observational study of the health of pesticide applicators.

- Initial health assessment (health history, physical exam, blood and urine tests, DNA sample, and dust samples)
- Yearly health surveys and full health assessment every 4 years

After the first 15 years:
- Published more than a dozen paper from the database
- Require a elaborate data-sharing agreement before releasing the data

Drs Kessenbaum and Wilcox’s dilemma is that they recently received requests for access to the database from:
- A pesticide company
- A competing research team
- A radical environment group with an anti-pesticide agenda

**QUESTIONS**
- How should Drs. K and W handle these requests to access their database?
- Is it ethical to require people who request data to sign elaborate data sharing agreements?
Anonymous survey of college students on opinion about academic integrity
• 20 questions (Likert scale)
• 10 open-ended questions
• 480 surveys administered (320 responses)

Issues:
1. 8 surveys appear as practical jokes
   – Some questions appear usable but some do not
2. 35 respondents appear to be confused about scale
   – They answer “5” when “1” is more logical given their other answers
3. 29 surveys have names on them when respondents were instructed not to do so

QUESTIONS:
1. How should the researchers deal with these issues with their data?
2. Should they try to edit/fix surveys that have problems?
3. Should they throw away any surveys? Which ones?
4. How might their decisions concerning the disposition of these surveys affect their overall results?