

INTRODUCTION

Ethics is a core component of all psychology curricula.¹

Understanding psychologists' ethical responsibilities is a key learning goal for undergraduate psychology education according to the American Psychological Association.²

98% of introductory psychology instructors use textbooks as the primary reading material for courses.^{3,4}

Given increasing concern about the use of animals in research,⁵ **we were interested in assessing the content of discussions of animal research ethics in introductory psychology textbooks.**



DISCUSSION

Introductory psychology textbooks' discussions of animal research ethics focus primarily on defending the practice (e.g., rationale, regulation, good intentions of researchers, human benefits).

Discussions do not adequately address ethical dilemmas of using animals in research (e.g., motivations behind objections, controversy over effectiveness, alternatives).



METHODS

Eighteen general psychology textbooks were analyzed using a previously developed coding scheme.⁶ Two coders scored each textbook for the (a) presence and (b) extent of discussion in 13 categories (Inter-rater agreement $M = 91.67 \pm 8.65\%$).

Categories were scored as follows:

(0) = absent, no mention; **(+)** = present; **(++)** = in-depth discussion.

If a topic was scored as 0 by one coder, but + or ++ by the other, a + was used in the calculation of percentage of books addressing a specific category.



CONCLUSION

Instructors should supplement textbook discussions of animal research ethics with additional readings and exercises.

In-class debates

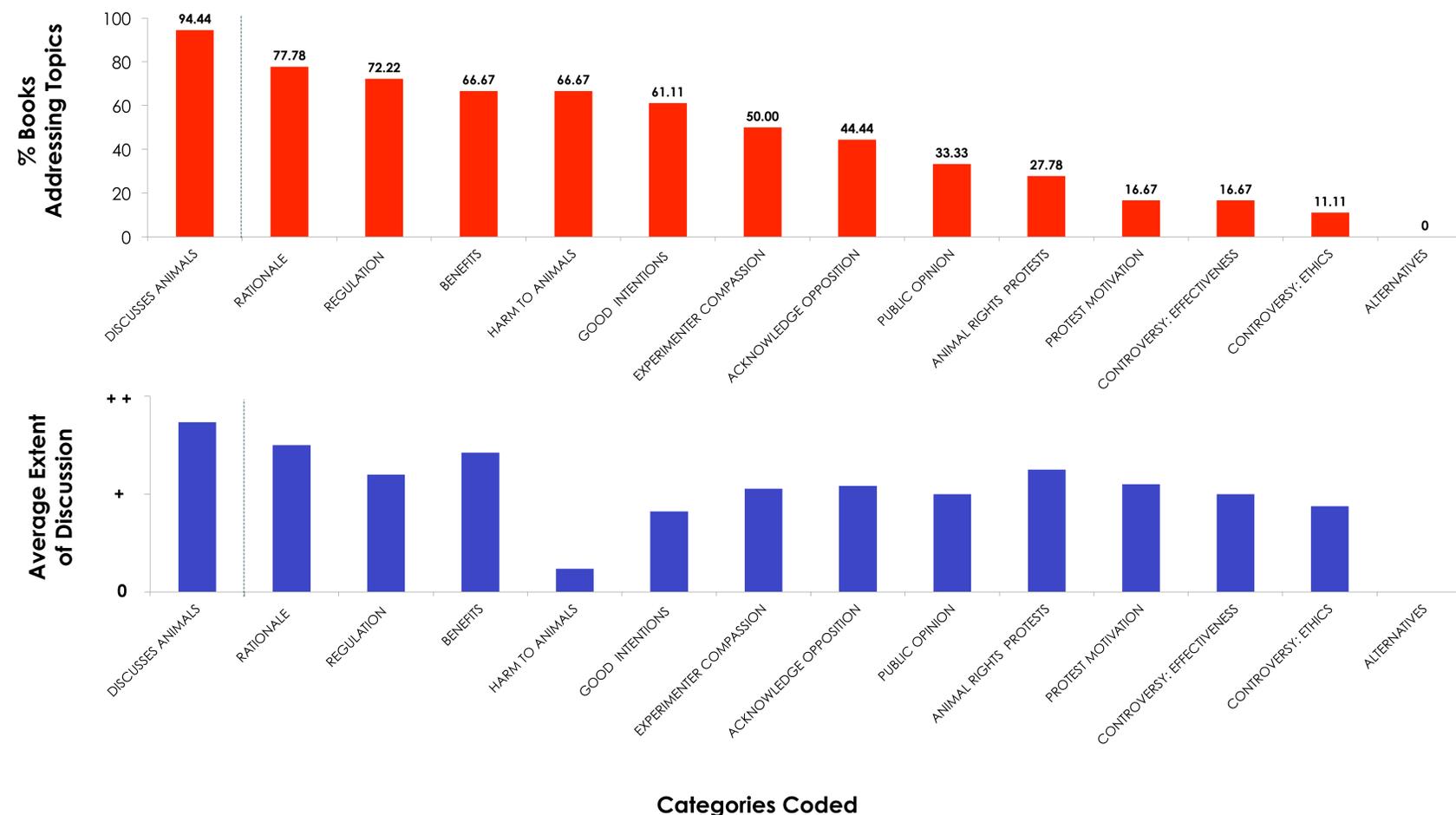
Students can read about and defend different positions regarding the use of animals in research (e.g., *Taking Sides* chapters), helping them understand and think more critically about the issue.



Mock IACUC

Guided by a *Teaching of Psychology* exercise,⁷ students can form their own mock Institutional Animal Care and Use Committees (IACUC) and review animal experiment protocols to decide whether they should be approved or denied. This exercise helps illustrate how making ethical decisions is a complex process.

RESULTS



REFERENCES

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