

Table 1. Lack of information on ethical approval in health and social sciences articles with Swedish research persons. Non-sign. p>0,05.

Study characteristics	Health sciences, somatic focus (n=200)		Health sciences, non-somatic focus (n=200)		Social sciences (n=200)		Total (n=600)	
	Information missing	Fisher's exact test, p-value	Information missing	Fisher's exact test, p-value	Information missing	Fisher's exact test, p-value	Information missing	Fisher's exact test, p-value
All articles	12/200; 6%	---	21/200; 11%	---	54/200; 27%	---	87/600; 15%	---
Study type:								
intervention	0/77; 0%	a	3/20; 15%	Non-sign.	3/22; 14%	Non-sign.	6/119; 5%	<0.01
observation	12/123; 10%		18/180; 11%		51/178; 29%		81/481; 17%	
No. of authors:								
1-2	0/5; 0%	a	6/16; 38%	<0.01	24/57; 43%	<0.01	30/78; 38%	<0.001
>=3	12/195; 6%		15/184; 8%		30/143; 20%		57/522; 11%	
University:								
with medical school ^b	12/194; 6%	a	12/165; 7%	<0.01	28/116; 27%	Non-sign.	54/475; 11%	<0.001
Other ^c	0/6; 0%		9/35; 26%		26/84; 31%		35/125; 28%	

^a Not possible to calculate because of low numbers

^b Including university hospitals

^c Including 7 articles from non-academic institutions

Table 2. Lack of information on ethical approval in social sciences articles by disciplines. Odds ratios for information on ethical approval missing, with 95% confidence intervals.

Discipline	Social sciences (n=200)	
	Information missing	Odds ratio (95% conf. intervals)
All	54/200 (27%)	1.00
Sociology and related ^a	26/93; 31%	1.05 (0.61;1.82)
Psychology and related	10/32; 31%	1.23 (0.55-2.76)
Alcohol and substance abuse	1/12; 8%	0.25 (0.03-1.95)
Education	6/20; 30%	1.16 (0.42-3.17)
Elderly	0/25; 0%	0.11 (0.01-0.82) ^c
Other ^b	11/18; 61%	4.25 (1.57-11.5)

^a Including social work, criminology, work environment

^b Including political science, economics, linguistics, sports research, communication, environmental research

^c 0 instances of missing information replaced by 1 to calculate odds ratio

Table 3. Journal impact factor for articles with and without ethical approval by research area. Means and 95% confidence intervals.

Research area	Ethical approval, mean (95% CI)	
	Reported	Not reported
Health sciences, somatic focus	4.55 (4.14;4.96)	6.35 (4.05;8.65)
Health sciences, non-somatic focus	3.15 (2.71;3.59)	3.04 (2.32;3.76)
Social sciences	2.20 (2.03;2.37)	1.86 (1.60;2.12)

Table 4. Ethical comments in articles not reporting on ethical approval by the national Ethics Review Authority (or its predecessor Regional Review Boards).

Ethical comment	Health science with somatic focus	Health science with non-somatic focus	Social sciences	Total
Stating “not required” or “not relevant”	0	2	4	6
Referral to approval by local committee or to local guidelines	0	0	5 ^a	5
General assurance of adherence to ethical guidelines and/or referral to the Helsinki Declaration	1	3	3	7
Student work ^b	0	2	0	2
None	11	14	42	67

^a Including 1 study that referred to approval by an agency other than the Ethical Review Authority

^b Student works are exempted in the Swedish Act om research ethics review

