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Drug Researchers to Adopt Education's "Gold Standard"

Instead of the double-blind experimental approach used for years to determine a drug's effectiveness, the nation's top drug researchers will now use randomized field trials, dubbed the "Gold Standard" by top salesmen in the discipline of education research. Recognizing a true breakthrough when they see it, the drug researchers are anticipating what promises to be an exciting new era.

"We should have known they were onto something when we first heard what they'd named it," said Robert Ivers, President of the Drug Research Association. "It would have amounted to little more than arrogant propaganda for them to call it the Gold Standard if it had any glaring weaknesses. I'm sorry it's taken so long for us to switch over."

As part of the switchover to the Gold Standard,

Ivers announced, members of treatment and control groups in drug trials will now be told whether or not they are getting the drug or the placebo. Select research subjects will be expected to drop out of the study, yet key characteristics of that group, and the reasons for their attrition, will remain unknown. Also, members of the control group will be able to obtain the study drug on their own, outside the study - but the researchers won't always know which members of the control group have done this.

"Apparently," Ivers noted, "the Gold Standard necessitates these wild cards that will require the researchers to later make various unsubstantiated assumptions to compensate for weaknesses in the data. This generates fascinating debates among competing researchers and makes everything much more interesting."

New Standards for Economists Announced

All future economic research will be required to be based on a model that has no actual connection to the real world but that arrives at findings that are clear and definite. The new rules are contained in the Standards for Economists (4th Edition), published by the Society of Misleading Ivory Tower Economists (SMITE).

The rules, which merely codify long-accepted practice, were met with wide praise. "Elegance is found in the model itself," said Richard Luke of the University of Chicago. "The real world is ugly and messy - it's not elegant at all. We should never waste time trying to understand it. And we should certainly never let it pollute our beautiful models."

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