

How Social Scientists Find Information

Part A.

Answer the following questions. Be prepared to explain your answers.

1. If you wanted to study an ancient Amerindian society, what methods would you use to investigate its culture?
2. If you wanted to study why fads become popular, what techniques would you use?
3. If you wanted to know the effects of drinking coffee on an adolescent's sleep patterns, what procedure would you use?

Part B.

Read the study below.

Benefits from Exercise

A little exercise can help older people sleep better, according to a pair of studies.

One study, led by researchers at Stanford University, involved 43 sedentary, healthy adults 50 to 76 years old with mild to moderate sleep problems, such as taking longer than 25 minutes on average to fall asleep and sleeping an average of only six hours a night.

Half the participants underwent 16 weeks of aerobics, each week consisting of two hour-long low-impact classes at a YMCA and two 40-minute sessions of brisk walking or stationary cycling at home. The other half did nothing.

At the end of the study, the subjects who exercised reported that they fell asleep about 15 minutes faster and slept about 45 minutes longer than before. Those who did not exercise showed little or no improvement.

The research is published in the [January 1, 1997] issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.¹

¹Associated Press, "Benefits from Exercise," *Washington Post*, January 1, 1997.

Part C.

Answer the following questions about the study.

1. What do the researchers expect to prove?
2. In this experiment, which group gets to exercise?
3. What did the other group involved in the study do?
4. What was the difference between the two groups?
5. As a result of exercise, what did the researchers hope would happen?
6. What did the researchers find out?

Part D.

Create definitions for each of the terms listed by examining the corresponding answers in part C.

1. Hypothesis
2. Experimental group
3. Control group
4. Independent variable
5. Dependent variable
6. Conclusion