**The Lillian Jones Case**

**A Case Study in Research Ethics**

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**Narrator:** Lillian Jones; Mary Winter.

**Background**

Lillian Jones is a graduate student, studying speech pathology at the university. As part of her dissertation research, she is observing several children at the university clinic that belongs to the department of speech pathology.

During her weekly observations, Lillian met an old friend Mary Winter, who is a graduate student in speech pathology too. Her friend is writing a master thesis and making some interviews with the staff of the clinic.

Lillian and Mary decided to have a breakfast together. They talked about all the challenges they faced during their study and especially making observations and diagnosing cases. Before finishing their breakfast, Mary wanted to know about Lillian’s research focus.

LILLIAN: I’m doing a comparative study of four children who were diagnosed with specific language impairments (SLI).

MARY: Oh, the new children who were admitted last month, right?

LILLIAN (nods looking with wonder): Yes. They’ve been diagnosed before with a language disorder for no apparent reason, but I am revaluating them.

MARY: I saw them before I was curious, I believe their disorder is a specific type of a psychiatric disorder.

LIILIAN: ( with hesitation) may be. How did you get the permission to visit them?

MARY: I know all the people in the clinic.

LILLIAN: But, this is not allowed. You can’t see any case you want, there’re confidentiality issues involved.

Lillian realized that Mary knows important information about patients in the clinic.

**Questions for Discussions**

* What does Lillian need to do?
* Is Mary doing anything wrong?
* From your own perspective, how much information Lillian needs to disclose about her research ?
* What kind of information you need to know in order to make the right judgment about the case?

**References**

May George, Ph.D., I was inspired to write this case after reading, “The Cynthia Lee Case by Kenneth D. Pimple, Ph.D.,”.