

Ethics & Medical Research

Between Scandal & Protectionism

As you read the material for the next class, keep the questions below in mind. To answer these questions you will have to reflect critically on what you have read and possibly re-read important passages. Keep in mind that there are two basic kinds of information that you need to look for in the readings:

1. What are the main points or conclusions that an author accepts with respect to a particular issue?
2. What are the reasons, important considerations, and evidence that lead the author to accept that conclusion?

For our purposes, *it is information of the second sort that will be our primary concern* since our most basic task is to *evaluate the reasons and evidence* that are offered to support accepting one possible conclusion about an issue, rather than another.

Although I strongly suggest that you write out brief answers to these questions, you do not have to turn in written responses. You do, however, need to be prepared to speak intelligently to these issues in the next class meeting.

Readings

- Michael Lemonick & Andrew Goldstein with Alice Park, “At Your Own Risk” (PDF on webpage).
- Martin Seligman, “Infectious Disease” and “Ethics and Institutional Review Boards” (PDF on webpage).

Questions

1. What is the crux of disagreement between these two articles?
2. What problems do the articles claim to affect the current system for conducting clinical trials? Do they see the same problems, or different ones?
3. What is an IRB, and which article do you think has the stronger and more compelling argument when it comes to the problems with IRBs?