

Ethics & Medical Research

American Post-War Research Scandals

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

- John Arras, "Jewish Chronic Disease Hospital Case", pp. 73–79.
- Walter Robinson & Brandon Unruh, "The Hepatitis Experiments at the Willowbrook State School", pp. 80–85.

Questions

1. How would you evaluate these two cases in light of the Nuremberg Code?
2. What reasons did Drs. Southam and Mandel provide to justify their decisions during their study at the Jewish Chronic Disease Hospital? What are the key concerns they believe that physicians should consider when trying to determine what to tell their patients about a proposed treatment or research project?
3. What does the Board of Regents think that Drs. Southam and Mandel have done wrong? What are the values or considerations that the Board takes to be paramount in evaluating this case?
4. What reasons did Dr. Krugman provide to justify his decisions during his study at the Willowbrook State School? Does this rationale share any similarities with the one made by Drs. Southam and Mandel?
5. What seven criticisms are made against Dr. Krugman's study, and how do Robinson and Brandon respond to them? What do you think the Board of Regents (from the Jewish Chronic Disease Hospital case) would think of these responses?
6. What is your considered moral evaluation for each of these two cases? Did the doctors involved engage in unethical research, or did they display sufficient ethical concern? Provide an explicit argument for each conclusion.