

Ethics & Medical Research

Philosophical Responses

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

- Ezekiel Emanuel & Christine Grady, "Four Paradigms of Clinical Research and Research Oversight", pp. 222–230.
- Ezekiel Emanuel, David Wendler & Christine Grady, "An Ethical Framework for Biomedical Research", pp. 123–135.

Questions

1. How would you characterize the values endorsed by each of the four paradigms discussed by Emanuel and Grady? How does each conceive of the relationship between the social good and individual interests? What do you take to be the relative strengths and weaknesses of each paradigm?
2. What is the relationship between the eight requirements for biomedical research that Emanuel, Wendler, and Grady identify? Are these distinct values? Do some values emanate from the others, or are they independent of one another? Which of these eight values have the clearest operational guidelines or tests associated with them? Which are less operationally precise? Overall, do you agree with Emanuel and colleagues that these values are both necessary and sufficient for ethical research?