

24 - Landmark studies relevant for critique on eth

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© SPM Course □ Declaration of Geneva 1948: Reaffirmation of humanitarian aims of medicine by World Medical Association. The Declaration of Geneva is a modification of Hippocratic Oath, intended to highlight the dedication of medical profession for the cause of humanitarian goals. □ Declaration of Helsinki 1964: This was adopted by The 18th World Medical Association General Assembly in 1964 and has been amended five times since, most recently in 2000. Notes of clarification were added in 2002 and 2004. The current (2004) version is the only official one. The Declaration specifically addresses clinical research, reflecting changes in medical practice from the term 'Human Experimentation' used in the Nuremberg Code. Landmark studies relevant for critique on ethics Tuskegee Syphilis Study (1932-1972): Between 1932 and 1972, US public health service followed up nearly six hundred low-income African-American males, 400 of whom were infected with syphilis. All diseased subjects were periodically examined but were not informed of the disease that they were diagnosed with and the implications of such diagnosis, even after the introduction of penicillin in 1950s. In some cases, when other physicians diagnosed subjects as having syphilis, researchers intervened to prevent treatment, in order to study the natural course of syphilis. Many subjects died of syphilis during the study. The study was strongly criticized, and US government issued a public apology in 1997. As a result of this Belmont Report was produced. Important principles outlined:

1. Respect for persons i.e. Individuals should be treated as autonomous agents and those with diminished autonomy should be adequately protected for research purposes.
2. Informed consent should be obtained by providing full information, ensuring comprehension and maintaining voluntariness (can withdraw at any time).
3. During a research, beneficial effects must outweigh any harms caused, with a systematic assessment of benefits and risks carried out beforehand. Willowbrook School Study (1963 - 1966): Mentally handicapped children at Willowbrook State School were deliberately infected with hepatitis after parents gave consent for what they thought to be vaccinations. The study was looking at the course of hepatitis and effectiveness of viral inoculation. There is evidence to suggest only consenting families were admitted to the

school. Jewish Chronic Disease Hospital: Studies to develop information about the nature of human transplant rejection. Chronically ill patients who did not have cancer were unknowingly injected with cancerous human liver cells. The defense argued that the administration did not want to scare patients and expected the cells to be rejected.

© SPMM Course Tearoom Trade Study: During 1960s, a sociologist called Laud Humphries followed up many men who had anonymous sex in public places by tracing their number plates after falsely befriending them. The research was conducted without explicit informed consent and became a matter of debate, highlighting the importance of ethics in scientific research in non-medical fields of enquiry.

DISCLAIMER: This material is developed from various revision notes assembled while preparing for MRCPsych exams. The content is periodically updated with excerpts from various published sources including peer-reviewed journals, websites, patient information leaflets and books. These sources are cited and acknowledged wherever possible; due to the structure of this material, acknowledgments have not been possible for every passage/fact that is common knowledge in psychiatry. We do not check the accuracy of drug-related information using external sources; no part of these notes should be used as prescribing information

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