



Sample of Medical Ethics Cases

1796 Edward Jenner injects healthy eight-year-old James Phillips first with cowpox then three months later with smallpox and is hailed as discoverer of smallpox vaccine.

1845-1849: J. Marion Sims, "the father of gynecology" performed multiple experimental surgeries on enslaved African women without the benefit of anesthesia. After suffering unimaginable pain, many lost their lives to infection. One woman was made to endure 34 experimental operations for a prolapsed uterus.

1895: New York pediatrician Henry Heiman infects a 4 year old boy with gonorrhea.

1896: Dr. Arthur Wentworth performed spinal taps on 29 children at Children's Hospital, Boston, to determine if the procedure was harmful. Dr. John Roberts of Philadelphia, noting the non-therapeutic indication, labeled Wentworth's procedures "human vivisection."

1897: Italian bacteriologist Sanarelli injects five subjects with bacillus searching for a causative agent for yellow fever.

1900: Walter Reed injects 22 Spanish immigrant workers in Cuba with the agent for yellow fever paying them \$100 if they survive and \$200 if they contract the disease.

1906: Dr. Richard Strong, a professor of tropical medicine at Harvard, experiments with cholera on prisoners in the Philippines killing thirteen.

1913: Pennsylvania House of Representatives recorded that 146 children had been inoculated with syphilis, "through the courtesy of the various hospitals" and that 15 children in St. Vincent's House in Philadelphia had had their eyes tested with tuberculin. Several of these children became permanently blind. The experimenters were not punished.

1915: A doctor in Mississippi, working for the U.S. Public Health Office produces Pellagra in twelve Mississippi inmates in an attempt to discover a cure for the disease

1919-1922: Testicular transplant experiments on five hundred prisoners at San Quentin.

1927: Carrie Buck of Charlottesville is legally sterilized against her will at the Virginia Colony Home for the Mentally Infirm. Carrie Buck was the mentally normal daughter of a mentally retarded mother,

but under the Virginia law, she was declared potentially capable of having a "less than normal child." By the 1930s, seventeen states in the U.S. have laws permitting forced sterilization

1931: Lubeck, Germany, 75 children die in from pediatrician's experiment with tuberculosis vaccine.

1931: Dr. Cornelius Rhoads, a pathologist, conducted a cancer experiment in Puerto Rico under the auspices of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Investigations. Dr. Rhoads has been accused of purposely infecting his Puerto Rican subjects with cancer cells. Thirteen of the subjects died.

1932-1972: U.S. Public Health Service study in Tuskegee, Alabama of more than 400 black sharecroppers observed for the natural course of untreated syphilis.

1939: Twenty-two children living at the Iowa Soldiers' Orphans' Home in Davenport were the subjects of The "monster" experiment that used psychological pressure to induce children who spoke normally to stutter. It was designed by one of the nation's most prominent speech pathologists, Dr. Wendell Johnson, to test his theory on the cause of stuttering.

1940's: In a crash program to develop new drugs to fight Malaria during World War II, doctors in the Chicago area infected nearly 400 prisoners with the disease. Although the Chicago inmates were given general information that they were helping with the war effort, they were not informed about the nature of the experiment

1941: Dr. William C. Black inoculated a twelve month old baby with herpes. He was criticized by Francis Payton Rous, editor of the Journal of Experimental Medicine, who called it "an abuse of power, an infringement of the rights of an individual, and not excusable because the illness which followed had implications for science." Dr. Rous rejected outright the fact that the child had been "offered as a volunteer."

1942: Harvard biochemist Edward Cohn injects sixty-four Massachusetts prisoners with beef blood in U.S. Navy-sponsored experiment.

1943 Refrigeration experiment conducted on sixteen mentally disabled patients who were placed in refrigerated cabinets at 30 degree Fahrenheit, for 120 hours, at University of Cincinnati Hospital., "to study the effect of frigid temperature on mental disorders."

1942-1944: U.S. Chemical Warfare Service conducts mustard gas experiments on thousands of servicemen.

1944-1946: University of Chicago Medical School professor Dr. Alf Alving conducts malaria experiments on more than 400 Illinois prisoners.

1945: Malaria experiment on 800 prisoners in Atlanta.

1951 Henrietta Lacks unknowingly gives up cells from her cervix during cancer treatment at Johns Hopkins University Hospital. Dr. George Otto Gey uses the cells for his biomedical research.