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Human justice: the developed and developing worlds



Box 19.2 Activity: Web-wandering and paired reflection

Enter 'Tuskegee syphilis study' into a search engine to discover the facts about this study. Then with a partner reflect on the mind-set of the researchers involved.

Do you think they knew but didn't care that their actions were morally despicable?

Could they have convinced themselves that in the case of their study the end justified the means?

Do you think the end could ever justify the means used by these researchers and by the Nazi doctors?



Box 19.3 Activity: Group discussion

As a group discuss Milgram's experiment, the results it demonstrates and what we learn from this about the need

- (i) for people to take *personal* moral responsibility for their actions;
- (ii) to monitor the ethical standards observed by those conducting research on human beings.



Box 19.4 Activity: Essay writing

Consider the list of guidance that researchers and sponsors may need to refer to. Then write 1,000 words on the following topic:

The overly costly and time-consuming burden on scientific research posed by ethical review should be reduced

In your essay you should consider not only *whether* the burden of ethical review should be reduced, but also *how* it might be reduced consistently with protecting human subjects and the researchers against litigation.



Box 19.6 Activity: Small group exercise

In groups of three or four consider whether you believe that in the following cases genuine consent was, or could be, obtained from subjects by researchers:²⁵

- (i) Parental consent was sought from mothers of semi-conscious children for these children to be given artesunate suppositories upon emergency admission to hospital in Malawi.
- (ii) In Kenya a consent form designed in English and translated into the local language contained mistranslations for several key terms.
- (iii) In India the consent form for a trial of a rotavirus vaccine was 9 pages long and contained a great deal of technical information.
- (iv) In Mexico national regulations specify that consent is valid only if recorded on a form signed by the participant and two witnesses. The first witness is usually the researcher but, in the case of a woman, the second will often be a senior male relative.

In each case give reasons for the answers you give. If you think there are or might be difficulties in obtaining genuine consent consider how the difficulties might be overcome.



Box 19.7 Activity: Group discussion

This house believes that it is wrong to accept double standards in clinical trials.

Participants might be left to argue for the side towards which they incline, or be allocated sides.



Box 19.8 Activity: Creative writing

You are the public relations officer of a major pharmaceutical. Tomorrow your Chief Executive Officer will be interviewed on the radio about the price of your drugs in comparison with the price of generic versions.

Write a briefing paper for your CEO, arming him with arguments he might use.



Box 19.9 Activity: Debate

Participants should be divided into groups and required to argue on one or other side of the following motion:

This house believes that public health is more important than profit. The TRIPS agreement should be abolished.

Participants should be given time to prepare their arguments.

Those arguing for the motion should be asked to consider how research and development should be rewarded if not with patents.

Those arguing against the motion should be asked to consider how we might secure equity in healthcare for those in the developing world.



Box 19.10 Activity: Small group work

Three patients each need a heart transplant as quickly as possible. Unusually a heart is available for each, but budgetary considerations are such that only one of them can have the operation. The others, sadly, will die.

The three patients are:

- Daisy Simmonds, 5 years old. Daisy has a congenital heart defect and is currently very ill indeed, not least because in addition to her heart defect she has cystic fibrosis (which means she is unlikely to live past 30). Daisy's parents and her four brothers and sisters are distraught about Daisy's health.
- James Trojan, 43 years old. James has not lived a healthy life (he is a heavy smoker, doesn't exercise and he is extremely fat, though not clinically obese), and although he claims he will reform should he have the operation, his doctors are pessimistic. James is married, employed full time and has a child of 15.
- Hilary Playter, 61 years old. Hilary is a fit and active pensioner with an equally fit husband of 67, three children and six grandchildren, all of whom adore her.

Having appointed a spokesperson for your group decide who should have the operation and who should come second (in case the first person dies before the operation).

**Box 19.11 Activity: Personal reflection/debate**

Take a look at this website:

http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/life_and_style/health/article5151526.ece.

Then consider whether or not you think that the UK (or your own country) should move to a system of 'presumed consent'.

If you'd like to hold a debate on this topic, this topic guide from Debating Matters will help:

http://www.debatingmatters.com/topicguides/topicguide/organ_donation/.

**Box 19.12 Activity: Web-wandering**

Wander around the web and see if you can find the going price for a kidney in your country. Would you sell your kidney for this?

**Box 19.13 Activity: Essay writing**

Conduct some research on how a global market in human organs might work. Then write 1,500 words arguing for or against such a market.