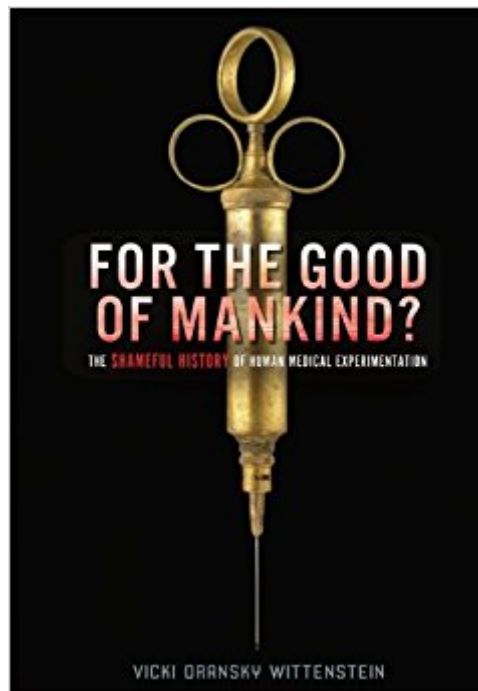




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For The Good Of Mankind?: The Shameful History Of Human Medical Experimentation



Synopsis

Experiment: A child is deliberately infected with the deadly smallpox disease without his parents' informed consent. Result: The world's first vaccine. Experiment: A slave woman is forced to undergo more than thirty operations without anesthesia. Result: The beginnings of modern gynecology. Incidents like these paved the way for crucial, lifesaving medical discoveries. But they also harmed and humiliated their test subjects, many of whom did not agree to the experiments in the first place. How do doctors balance the need to test new medicines and procedures with their ethical duty to protect the rights of human subjects? Take a harrowing journey through some of history's greatest medical advances and its most horrifying medical atrocities; to discover how human suffering has gone hand in hand with medical advancement.

Book Information

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Age Range: 12 - 17 years

Grade Level: 7 - 12

Customer Reviews

Gr 8 Up — This chilling narrative exposes the history of human medical experimentation, much of which has occurred in the United States. By examining the use of humans as guinea pigs in medical research since the 1700s, Wittenstein explains the evolution of modern regulations, review boards, and organizations focused on ethical treatment of patients and approved research procedures. While the exploitation of unsuspecting orphans and pregnant women or intentionally withholding established medical cures from sick patients may seem gruesome, the narrative is

successful at presenting both sides of the issue: the patient whose rights are being violated and the doctor intent on furthering science. Of particular note is the discussion of stem-cell research, which brings these historical medical controversies to light in a modern setting. The black-and-white photographs present a human face to these experiments and, if used in the classroom, this title will spark an educated debate. A "Critical Analysis" section presents questions for readers to consider and discuss while sources for additional information list print, media, and websites that will appeal to a wide variety of readers. This title is an important addition to public and school libraries. It will pair well with books on topics ranging from medicine and history to human rights and law. Meaghan Darling, Plainsboro Public Library, NJ (c) Copyright 2013. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.

More than just a historical treatment of human experimentation, this title also offers an introduction to timely related issues involving biospecimens, stem cell research, and genetic enhancement. Archival photographs of test subjects, including prison and concentration camp inmates, accompany chilling tales of torturous experimentation. How do "respect, beneficence, and justice," as described in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, and "The Common Rule" that that department published in 1991 fit with the ongoing practice of using humans as guinea pigs? Writing from a mindful, balanced perspective, Wittenstein keeps the essential ethical questions about rights of the individual, the advancement of science, and the evolution of informed consent in clear view. Chapter notes offering further critical analysis focus mainly on bioethical issues, while the source notes, a selected bibliography, lists of additional resources, and an index extend this substantive, informative resource. Researchers may find additional suggestions for further exploring the topic on the publisher's website. Grades 8-12. --Gail Bush

When we think about inhumane medical experiments on human subjects, the Nazis immediately come to mind. Dr. Josef Mengele was notorious for his brutal treatment, in the name of "science," of twins and other unfortunate concentration camp inmates in Auschwitz. "For the Good of Mankind?" is a revealing work of non-fiction by Vicki Oransky Wittenstein, who informs us that the Nazis were not alone in their barbaric behavior. For many years, scientists, physicians, and members of the military have been using people as guinea pigs without the subjects' knowledge or informed consent. Although Hippocrates stated in his famous oath, "First of all, do no harm," many individuals have been deformed, sickened, and have even died after practitioners exposed them to radiation,

dangerous chemicals, syphilis, anthrax, and other toxic substances. It is an egregious breach of medical ethics to exploit people in this manner. Of course, clinical trials using volunteers are common and often perfectly legal. If those who take part in these trials are treated compassionately and in accordance with proper guidelines, there is no problem. In fact, such trials can lead to important breakthroughs that may benefit mankind. However, some clinical trials are of questionable value and even more troubling, researchers are not always careful to protect the rights of the participants. As an example of how even a democratic government can condone cruel practices, approximately "sixty thousand people were sterilized in the United States" in the twentieth century as part of the eugenics campaign that was designed to prevent "unfit" people from reproducing. The author horrifies us with both well-known and obscure examples of outrageous breaches of patients' rights. For example, tuberculosis toxin was injected "into the eyes of about 160 healthy children under the age of eight, including 17 infants" in a Philadelphia orphanage in 1908. This is not an isolated case. In fact, from the 1700s to the 1940s, American doctors used African-American slaves, the mentally ill, orphans, prisoners, soldiers and others as experimental subjects. In spite of the outcry from America's antivivisection movement, whose leaders decried "experimental surgery on living creatures," researchers continued carrying on their questionable activities. Since medical research is "a multi-billion dollar business," the profit motive frequently takes precedence over human rights. "For the Good of Mankind?" is lucidly written and beautifully organized. Wittenstein includes informative sidebars, evocative photographs, a critical analysis section, extensive notes, a bibliography, and a useful index. For high school students, this would be an excellent resource for a term paper on an important and controversial topic that will remain a subject of heated debate for years to come. As new therapies involving genes, stem cells, and other cutting edge procedures are contemplated in the future, our society will have to decide whether "medical research must meet the requirements of respect, beneficence, and justice."

Eva Mozes could never have imagined in a million years that simply being a twin would save her life. Nor could she have imagined that being one would send her into an unimaginable world of terror in Birkenau. Eva and her twin, Miriam, were separated from their family only to find themselves subjected to Dr. Josef Mengele's evil medical experiments. "I envision the chimneys, the smell of burning flesh, the medical injections, the endless blood taking, the tests, the dead bodies around us, the hunger, and the rats. The memories seared into her mind and body, never to leave. Mengele's crimes against humanity are well known, but what about the other, lesser

known ones? Young four-year-old Simeon Shaw was found to have a very rare form of bone cancer. The diagnosis set a wave of desperation through his family and the Australian family was willing to try anything, including traveling thousands of miles across the ocean in search of help. Simmy had less than a year to live, but perhaps the University of California Hospital in San Francisco (UCSF) could save him. A mercy flight soon ensued, but the medical experimentation that was carried on on him was far from merciful. A military experiment was underway and they "injected Simmy with toxic radioactive substances, including plutonium. It was a secret experiment without any ethical borders. Unusual? A single event? No. There have been countless victims throughout time, including more recent ones, experimented upon in the name of science. Supposedly sacrificing one or more for the common good was an acceptable practice. Eva claimed that "The scientists of the world must remember that the research is being done for the sake of mankind and not for the sake of science; scientist must never detach themselves from the humans they serve. Perhaps, but this detachment continued, some in secret experiments, others not so secret. In this book you will read about some horrifying experiments done with and without informed consent on men, women, and children conducted in a "conspiracy of silence. This is an amazing exposé of little- and well-known cases of human experimentation. Many students will read about the Nuremberg Trials and the resulting ethical stance that resulted in the Nuremberg Code. This "shameful history" discusses experiments that ignored that code, continuing to harm for the greater good of mankind. The cited cases, in some instances, are quite shocking. For example, young boys were fed radioactive oatmeal from 1946 to 1953. The book is generously illustrated with black and white photographs and has numerous, informative sidebars. In the back of the book are critical analysis questions for classroom examination and discussion, an index, a glossary, source notes, a selected bibliography, and additional recommended book, interview, film, a website resource to explore. This book courtesy of the publisher.

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