

## Human Experimentation—

### The Ethical Questions Persist

by **ROBERT M. VEATCH**  
and **SHARON SOLLITTO**

In 1966 a Harvard anesthesiologist shocked the biomedical research community by publishing in the *New England Journal of Medicine* the methods used in twenty-two experiments on human subjects. The material presented below, a summary of the research designs of 11 studies selected from a collection of 43 questionable experiments, suggests that the problem is still vast.

The tragic fact is that less than 25% of the studies in our file claim that consent was obtained from the participants in the research. In one paper documenting the results of the inf-

that "reasonable men" would agree that each raises disturbing questions.

All these studies have been published in reputable medical journals or professional proceedings since 1966. In all cases the research was done in the United States or the funding came from this country. Experimenters are not mentioned by name. Excluded from these cases are all those published before 1966 and those which have previously received public attention.

#### Grave Risks

recently as two weeks prior to the experiment, were hospitalized for the eight-day period of the study. A few days prior to the beginning of the study they were transfused "in anticipation of blood loss due to repeated sampling." On the third day, "all subjects were clinically dehydrated. Serum samples were limited to the supernatant of severe hyponatremia." The con-

*"Advances in biology and medicine raise profound and difficult questions touching the very nature of man."  
--Walter F. Mondale*

...hazardous. ...reader that al- ...procedure was explained to the subjects, they believe that "informed consent cannot be obtained for a study of this type." They claim that instead they "accepted the role of guarantor of the patient's rights and safety..."

**Experiment 2.** In a second study researchers sought to study plasma renin levels in patients with both kidneys removed. Ten patients, who had had their kidneys removed as

#### ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

**Alexander Capron** discusses experimentation with prisoners... **Stephen Viederman** examines population education... **Jack Himmelstein** and **Robert Michels** are the respondents to **Robert Veatch's** case study concerning the right to refuse psychoactive drugs... **Michael Hemphill** evaluates the ethics of screening for Huntington's disease.

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# The Institute:

## Its Programs and Goals

**You are invited to become an Associate Member of an organization founded specifically to deal with the social, ethical and legal issues of the biomedical revolution — issues like these:**

- Is compulsory screening for genetic disease ever justified?
- Is there ever a scientific discovery which should **not** be pursued?
- Is brain surgery for behavioral symptoms ever warranted?
- Is a genetic counselor's obligation greater to the client, to society at large, or to the future?
- When does a patient have the right to refuse life-extending treatment?
- Is the fetus human? Does it have rights?

**Questions like these are raised** by scientific and technological discoveries, but their impact is not limited to scientists. Remarkable advances have been made in organ transplantation, human experimentation, prenatal diagnosis of genetic disease, prolongation of life and control of human behavior—and each advance has posed specific problems requiring that scientific knowledge be matched with ethical insight.

Such advances have meant rethinking the meaning of life and death, of traditional values, of social policy and of human rights. The biomedical revolution, in fact, may have more effect upon the 70s and 80s than the splitting of the atom had on the 50s and 60s.

**The Institute of Society, Ethics and the Life Sciences** was founded in 1969 to fill the need for sustained, professional investigation of these issues.

The members of the Institute's research groups, men and women from many disciplines, focus their concerns on four major areas:

**Behavior Control** includes study of the cumulative impact of all the new technologies for manipulating man. These range from psychosurgery and implantation of electrodes in the brain, to mass media, advertising and institutional education.

**Population Policy** examines the ethical and social problems involved in controlling population growth while attempting to protect such values as freedom and security.

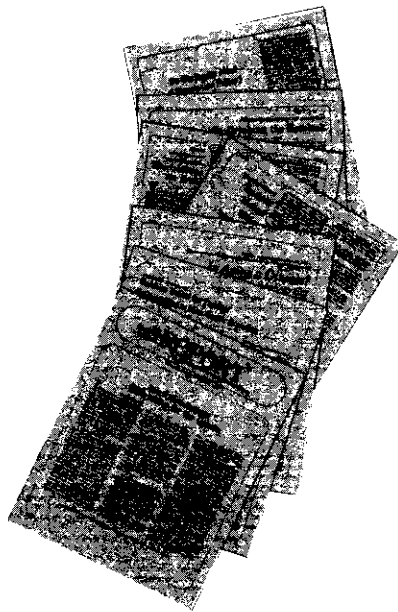
**Genetic Counseling and Engineering** raise major problems including the ethics of mass screening, the role of the counselor and new decisions parents face as a result of the ability to diagnose certain genetic diseases prenatally.

**Death and Dying** focuses on questions raised by the "new" brain criteria for determining death, attitudes toward the newly dead, new technologies for extending life, and the termination of treatment.

In addition, the Institute's **Humanities Program** brings together scholars and professionals for discussion of the larger issues which cut across all other groups: individualism, professional expertise, health. Many of the papers prepared for these discussions are printed in the **Hastings Center Studies**.

The Institute is also engaged in **Education Programs** which bring the experience of staff and research group members to students at all levels, in settings ranging from medical schools to community adult courses.

## *Becoming an Associate Member*



As a professional or an interested layperson, you may become an Associate Member of the Institute by mailing in your dues in the enclosed envelope.

This association involves you in the support of an important movement. The field of ethics and the life sciences is a rapidly-growing one whose importance has only recently been recognized. Your help enables the Institute to continue its constantly-expanding programs of research and education and to bring its results before the public for enlightened discussion.

Through the Institute's publications you are able to keep informed on the issues and dilemmas arising out of advances in biology and medicine—issues which are more and more beginning to touch each of our lives.

**Won't you join us in our efforts by becoming an Associate Member?** You receive not only the satisfaction of lending financial aid to the work of the Institute, but in addition are entitled to certain privileges and publications:

- The bimonthly **Hasting Center Report**, the first publication ever devoted entirely to discussions of bioethics
- The thrice-yearly **Hastings Center Studies**, a larger journal containing longer, more scholarly articles and extended treatment of the issues in the field

- A partially-annotated and selective **Bibliography of Society, Ethics and the Life Sciences**, containing the most pertinent references on genetic counseling, genetic engineering, allowing to die, definitions of death, population policy, abortion, contraceptives, experimentation, behavior control techniques, and other relevant topics
- Special rates on copies in bulk of Institute publications for classroom or discussion use
- Notice, before the general public, of internships, workshops in medical ethics, and conferences which are open

In addition, the Institute has on occasion provided curriculum assistance and related services to Associate Members. Many of our Members have also visited the Hastings Center of the Institute for one of its regular open houses.

Annual dues are \$15 for individuals, \$10 for full-time students and \$25 for institutions and organizations. A library subscription to all Institute publications is \$15.

### **A selection from past issues of Institute publications . . .**

**Chronicle of a Cadaver Transplant**, by Renée C. Fox and Judith P. Swazey  
**The Right to Die**, by Jonas B. Robitscher  
**Bioethics as a Discipline**, by Daniel Callahan  
**Personal Liberty and Behavior Control Technology**, by Perry London  
**A Place to Live, a Place to Die**, by Robert E. Neale  
**Procreative Rights and Population Policy**, by Arthur J. Dyck  
**Medical Ethics and Socio-political Change**, by Victor W. Sidel  
**The Wedge: Not So Simple**, by Paul Ramsey  
**Medical Science, the Clinical Trial and Society**, by Robert Q. Marston  
**Attitudes Toward the Newly Dead**, by William F. May  
**Genetic Knowledge and the Concept of Health**, by Marc Lappé  
**Birth, Death and Technology: The Limits of Cultural Laissez-Faire**,  
by Christopher Lasch  
**Models for Ethical Medicine in a Revolutionary Age**, by Robert M. Veatch  
**Illness—Mental and Otherwise**, by Peter Sedgwick  
**Indicators of Humanhood: A Tentative Profile of Man**, by Joseph Fletcher  
**Values, Ethics and Population Education**, by Stephen Viederman  
**Brain Surgery in Aggressive Epileptics**, by Vernon H. Mark  
**The Secularization of American Medicine**, by Roy Branson  
**Making and Escaping Moral Decisions**, by Eric J. Cassell  
**Reflections on the Hippocratic Oaths**, by June Goodfield  
**The WHO Definition of Health**, by Daniel Callahan  
**Health and Illness in Technological Societies**, by David Mechanic  
**Determining Death: Do We Need a Statute?** by Alexander M. Capron

### **Some recent achievements of the Institute . . .**

A major report on the ethics of various population policies, produced under contract for the President's Commission on Population Growth and the American Future.

Guidelines for mass genetic screening programs, to insure protection against unwarranted intrusion and potential stigmatization. Printed in a leading medical journal, the guidelines are in use in most screening programs.

A pilot medical ethics program at Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons, and a National Conference on the Teaching of Medical Ethics.

A four-day conference, in cooperation with the National Institutes of Health, on genetic counseling and the uses of genetic knowledge.

Conferences and symposia for the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American Association of University Women, the American Bar Association, and similar groups.

**P.S.** Many of our members choose to make an additional contribution when they pay their dues. It's tax-deductible, and a significant source of support for the Institute.