Online Ethics Center
FOR ENGINEERING AND SCIENCE

A Question of Host Factors in Side Effects of Medication

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Year

2000

Description

A scenario meant to stimulate discussion regarding ethical issues in conducting research with genetics: in examining blood for possible side effects from drugs, researchers notice a link with genetic predispositions.

Body

You are doing research to look for side effects of a certain drug. You know that evidence of such side effects shows up in blood. You also know that studies should be designed in a way that exposes subjects to as minimal risk as possible. Given this, you designed a study which looks at blood already being drawn from patients for other purposes.

As your study progresses, you discern that the pattern of both the efficacy of the drug and the incidence of some side effects suggests that they depend on genetic factors in subjects.

How, if at all, would it be ethical for you to look into this possibility?

Notes

Caroline Whitbeck introduced methods and modules for discussing numerous issues in responsible conduct of research at a Sigma Xi Forum in 2000. Partial funding for the development of this material came from an NIH grant.

You can find the entire sequence on the OEC at Scenarios for Ethics Modules in the Responsible Conduct of Research. Some information in these historical modules may be out-of-date; for instance, there may be a new edition of the professional society's code that is referred to in an item. If you have suggestions for updates, please contact the OEC.

Contributor(s)

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Resource Type

Case Study / Scenario

Parent Collection

Scenarios for Ethics Modules in the Responsible Conduct of Research

Topics

Human Subjects Research
Informed Consent

Discipline(s)

Life and Environmental Sciences
Research Ethics
Genetics and Genomics

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