



Online Ethics Center
FOR ENGINEERING AND SCIENCE

A Vaccine for Isolated Populations

Author(s)

Atwood D. Gaines

Year

2000

Description

A scenario meant to stimulate discussion about the ethical issues that arise when a research proposal includes a population vulnerable to the disease.

Body

An isolated population of Native Americans is considered for testing of the efficacy of a vaccine for smallpox. The population has never before been exposed to this illness which often has been fatal to groups when they have been afflicted and when they were previously unexposed (e.g., Inuit, Hawaiians).

1. What considerations are relevant to a decision to include this population in the study?
2. How might you assess the risks and benefits of including this population?

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 Some information in these historical modules may be out-of-date; for instance, there may be a new edition of the professional society's code that is referred to in an item.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)

Caroline Whitbeck

Rights

Use of Materials on the OEC

Discipline(s)

Immunology and Infectious Diseases

Life and Environmental Sciences

Public Health

Research Ethics

Publisher

Online Ethics Center