

THE ETHICS OF BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH

May 2001

Biomedical research is the systematic search for a greater understanding of biological processes as they relate to disease or health. Whether in the scientific laboratory or in the context of clinical practice, the aim of research is to promote the health and well-being of individuals.

- A. As members of CMDS:
1. We believe human beings are created in the image of God and therefore have intrinsic and immeasurable value.
 2. We believe individual human life begins at the time of conception.
 3. We believe the scientific process assumes order and consistency in the universe. However, this process does not in itself contain the mechanisms to cope with questions about the meaning and value of life.
 4. We believe God has endowed human beings with the ability and responsibility to test our experience and to share the benefits of our observations with others.
 5. We believe the natural world and its resources may be explored and utilized but should not be abused.
 6. We believe animal life is a part of creation that may be used for the benefit of human beings but must not be abused.
 7. We believe the aim of medical science should be to maintain health, relieve suffering, and to cure disease but not to create chimerical human life forms.
 8. We believe the autonomy of an individual must be respected. Informed consent must be obtained when conducting research that will affect that individual in any substantial way.
- B. Therefore, the position of CMDS is that:
1. It is the responsibility of all health care practitioners to remain current in their medical knowledge and to incorporate new knowledge into their practices upon the satisfactory validation of that knowledge.
 2. The use of an exploitative or unethical research process is never justified, no matter how noble the objective or how pressing the need for human health or well-being.
 3. Animal care is permissible as an essential prerequisite to conducting safe human research trials.
 4. Research on mentally competent human subjects should be conducted only with valid, informed consent. Research on children and the mentally incompetent may be authorized by legal guardian only if the research is unlikely to adversely affect the individual.
 5. The rights of the individual must be upheld and respected at all times. No human being can judge another human as being of lesser utilitarian value, and consequently a subordinate life form. Our responsibility is to uphold the sanctity of life. For example, we oppose the concept of conceiving an individual with the primary purpose of producing suitable tissue to be used for investigative or therapeutic transplantation into a second diseased individual.
 6. Medical research should be primarily motivated by the benefit that is accrued to others. Any research for personal or corporate gain must be equally subject to the full breadth of ethical standards.
 7. Strict honesty, objectivity and confidentiality in the acquisition, interpretation, reporting and application of all research data are important.