

Medical Ethics Test #2 Study Guide

Human Research

What are clinical trials?

What are the phases of a clinical trial? How are the goals of each phase different?

Be able to describe the following infamous human research programs and what went wrong:

WWII experiments

Tuskegee Syphilis experiments

Willowbrook Hepatitis experiments

Cold War Radiation experiments

What conflicts does human research pose for the administrators?

What rights issues are raised for the participants of the trials?

Be able to say what conditions of double effect are most likely not to be met during research.

What needs to happen to prevent the above conditions of double effect from not being met?

Paternalism and Patient Autonomy

What is paternalism? What is the difference between strong and weak paternalism?

What are some reasons for paternalism?

What is autonomy? What factors can limit patient autonomy?

What are some reasons for respecting patient autonomy?

The conflict between paternalism/autonomy is a conflict between which pillars of medical ethics?

Be able to determine and provide reasons for whether a patient is acting autonomously.

Proxies' Decision Making Power

Why can we not appeal to patient rights to determine whether proxies' decisions should be overridden?

What is the best interest standard? Give some problems with implementing it, with supporting cases.

What is the harm principle? Give some problems with implementing it, with supporting cases.

Do decisions about what ought to happen to a patient ultimately come down to values? Why or why not?

Truth-Telling

Give three reasons why it matters whether physicians tell the truth to their patients.

What is lying? When it is wrong, why is it wrong?

What kinds of truths are physicians morally obligated to divulge to patients? Why?

Is it ever permissible for a physician to postpone telling an important truth? Why or why not?

Do physicians have an obligation to ensure that patients are receptive to the truth? Why or why not?

Informed Consent

What are five conditions for determining whether a patient has given informed consent?

For each condition, what are ways of ensuring that it has been met?

Is a formal signature enough to ensure that consent has been given? Why or why not?

What are two models for obtaining informed consent? What are the shortcomings of each model?

Be able to determine whether a patient has given informed consent, and if not, why not.

Confidentiality

Give at least two reasons for why there is a moral obligation to respect patient confidentiality. (See the arguments made by the defendants in the Tarasoff case.)

Give a reason for why there is a moral obligation to warn others when they may be harmed.

What are some conflicts that physicians face when discerning whether to warn others of potential harms?

Be able to say when a physician is obligated to warn others of potential harms and why.

Describe the morally relevant events leading up to the Tarasoff case and the arguments on each side.

Conflicts of Interest

What is a conflict of interest?

What moral issues do conflicts of interest raise? How can medical professionals avoid these issues?

Be able to identify when a conflict of interest has occurred and the potential harms that might result.

Be able to make suggestions for what to do to mitigate the effects of the conflict of interest.

Be familiar with the Gelsinger case and why there was a conflict of interest in that case.