

ETHICAL PRINCIPLES OF THE BELMONT REPORT

The Committee is in part guided by the ethical principles set forth in the *Belmont Report. These principles are Respect for Persons, Beneficence, and Justice.

In consideration of Respect for Persons, investigators should obtain voluntary, informed consent of potential human subjects. Voluntary, informed consent means that subjects are given explicit assurances of the voluntary nature of their participation and adequate information about the study in order to decide whether to participate, in terms that are easy to understand. Respect also means honoring an individual's privacy and maintaining confidentiality when appropriate. Respect for immature or incapacitated persons may require taking extra precautions to protect them while they mature or are incapacitated, perhaps even to the extent of excluding them from participation in the research. The extent of protection should depend on the risks and the benefits of the research.

The principle of Beneficence requires that potential benefits to the subjects are maximized and potential risks of harm are minimized. Benefits to the subjects, or from knowledge to be gained, should, outweigh the risks.

Justice means that subjects are selected fairly and that the risks and benefits are distributed equitably among subjects. Care should be taken not to systematically select subjects simply because of their easy availability, their compromised position, or their manipulability, rather than for reasons directly related to the research problem.

*The complete Belmont Report can be consulted at the CPHS Office, Room 130, Thomas Administration Building.