

Human Radiation Experimentation: A Health Physics Perspective

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This paper observes ethical human experimentation can be considered in terms of two basic principle or test: informed, willing and knowledgeable subjects; and expectation of benefits. A number of human experiments are evaluated in terms of these principles, including a sixteenth century toxicology experiment, the deliberate exposure by and x0ray pioneer, and the plutonium injection cases of the 1940's. The following rational ethic is proposed for the practice of health physics with respect to human radiation experimentation: ***At all levels, the health physicist has a professional as well as personal obligation to ensure that proper humanitarian requirements, including proper informed consent and willing subjects, are carries out with respect to human radiation experimentation, and must be convinced that the real or potential benefits to be derived from the experiment clearly exceed the potential detriment and risk.***

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