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Ethical Issues in Research

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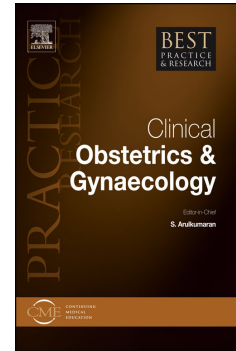
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**ETHICAL ISSUES IN RESEARCH**

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**Abstract**

Biomedical research is currently guided by ethical standards that have evolved over many centuries. Historical and political events, social and legal considerations and continuous medical and technological advances have led to the prevailing research ethics and practice.

Currently, patients and research subjects have complete autonomy while under medical care or when volunteering as research subjects. Enrolling volunteers in human subjects research includes a detailed and meaningful informed consent process that follows cardinal principles of ethics: autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence and justice. These principles were adopted gradually after World War II, primarily in response to the unethical behavior of German physicians and scientists during the Third Reich.

This review emphasizes the importance of historical milestones and the essential role that ethics has in contemporary medical research. Research protocols should achieve maximum benefits for the society, have clinical and scientific value, be subject to independent review, respect human dignity and follow the principles of informed consent and most importantly, subjects should have complete autonomy.

However, current principles and regulations cannot cover every conceivable situation, particularly in view of new advances in science and technology.

New and evolving medical technology, genetic research, therapeutic interventions and innovations, challenge society to maintain the highest moral and ethical principles.

**Keywords: Research ethics principles, eugenics, Nazi medicine, informed consent, women subjects in research, the fetus as a patient**

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