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C O P Y

Letter from J. E. Moore, M. D., to Dr. A. N. Richards

October 6, 1942

I have recently received a letter of enquiry from Dr. Charles M. Carpenter of the University of Rochester School of Medicine who believes that he may be able to work out a human experiment on the chemical prophylaxis of gonorrhoea. He has asked me to supply him with a statement that in my opinion such human experimentation is desirable. I have in turn replied enquiring from him as to whether he wishes a statement from me on an entirely personal basis or in one of my official capacities - as Chairman of the Subcommittee on Venereal Diseases, National Research Council, or as Special Consultant, U. S. Public Health Service. In either of the latter cases I have pointed out to Dr. Carpenter that I could not make such a statement without the approval of higher authority.

May I ask you to supply me with the attitude of the Committee on Medical Research toward human experimentation in general, and toward the particular problem of human experiment in the chemical prophylaxis of gonorrhoea.

Reply of A. N. Richards, Chairman, to Dr. J. E. Moore

October 9, 1942

In your letter of October 6th you ask that I advise you of the attitude of the Committee on Medical Research toward human experimentation in general, and toward the particular problem of human experiment on the chemical prophylaxis of gonorrhoea.

The Committee on Medical Research will hold its next meeting on October 29th. I shall present your question to them at that time. In the meantime I have confidence that the Committee will support me in the statement that human experimentation is not only desirable, but necessary in the study of many of the problems of war medicine which confront us. When any risks are involved, volunteers only should be utilized as subjects, and these only after the risks have been fully explained and after signed statements have been obtained which shall prove that the volunteer offered his services with full knowledge and that claims for damages will be waived. An accurate record should be kept of the terms in which the risks involved were described.

In answer to the second part of your question which concerns this specific case, the Committee on Medical Research must rely on the judgment of the Responsible Investigator, supplemented by the judgment of the committee in whose field the investigation is proceeding.

R. G. 227, OSRD, LMR, General Records, Box 43, Human Experiments, Folder

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C O P Y

Revision of Dr. Richards' letter of October 9, 1942)  
 Reply of A. N. Richards, Chairman, To Dr. J. E. Moore

October 31, 1942

In your letter to me of October 6 you raised the question of the attitude of the Committee on Medical Research toward human experimentation in general and toward the particular problem of human experiment in the chemical prophylaxis of gonorrhoea. I gave you a tentative reply under date of October 9 and brought the matter before the CMR at its meeting on October 29.

The statement in the second paragraph of my letter of the ninth referring to the general attitude was upheld.

"Human experimentation is not only desirable, but necessary in the study of many of the problems of war medicine which confronts us. When any risks are involved, volunteers only should be utilized as subjects, and these only after the risks have been fully explained and after signed statements have been obtained which shall prove that the volunteer offered his services with full knowledge and that claims for damages will be waived. An accurate record should be kept of the terms in which the risks involved were described."

I was instructed to recall the third paragraph of that letter and to offer in its place something to the following effect:

Whenever human experiments are planned as part of work called for in an OSRD contract recommended by CMR, the Committee on Medical Research should know in detail what they are. Further, it must be understood that legal responsibility for possible damages rests with the individual in charge of the experiments and the Institution for which he is agent. Arrangements can be made whereby both he and the Institution can be protected by insurance.

Hoping that the above statements provide adequate answer to your questions,  
 I am

Reply of J. E. Moore, M. D., to Dr. A. N. Richards

November 2, 1942

Thank you for your letter of October 31 outlining the attitude of the Committee on Medical Research toward human experimentation. I have forwarded a copy of your letter to Doctors C. M. Carpenter of Rochester, New York, and to Alfred Cohn of New York City, both of whom are interested in the possibility of human experimentation in gonorrhoea, though neither have as yet an OSRD contract for this purpose.