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A Reflection on the Ethical Dilemma in the Puerto Rico Pill Trials

Introduction

The Puerto Rico pill trial is one of the occurrences in the history of oral contraceptives that we must remember. During its development, there was a rush to conduct mass human trials, where Dr. Gregory Pincus and Dr. Rock conducted drug tests on desperate and un-informed women of Puerto Rico. This paper reflects on the ethical dilemma in the Puerto Rico pill trials.

I believe the women in Puerto were used as unwilling guinea pigs for the birth control pill being tested in a classic case of unethical medical testing. In my opinion, they were not informed about the possible side effects of the pill. I understand that when a researcher is conducting trials, even if it was based on informed consent, the participants must be made to understand the side effects that can occur. According to me, the participants in the test did not understand the testing. Another ethical issue I identified, in this case, is that it went against the recommended ideals in race, religion, science. America I know would not have embraced such a trial in the country. For that reason, I think the marginalized women in Puerto Rico and the lack of strong legislation offered the researchers an opportunity and the subjects to conduct the trial. In the end, they exploited this vulnerable group of women as nonconsenting subjects. I believe that one of the ethical assumptions in scientific research is informed consent. In the case of the Puerto Rico Pills trial, the researchers conducted drug tests on vulnerable and uneducated women without their consent.

Conclusion

The case of the Puerto Rico pills trial is just an example of how scientific breakthroughs come at the expense of the vulnerable and ill-informed masses. I believe this research was not founded on the basic principles and the ethical code of science. Though I celebrate the role of birth control pills in our society and those who made it possible, we must also remember their transgressions and the women whose bodies made these discoveries possible.

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