

# Taking Stock: Strengths, Issues, Gaps in the Ethical Oversight of Health Projects

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Protecting People While Increasing  
Knowledge: Ethics in Health Research  
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# Overview of Talk

## Increasing Knowledge:

What kinds of knowledge-increasing activities are we talking about?

Why engage in them?

## Protecting People:

What protections do people need?

## Practical Implications:

What do the answers to these questions imply for ethics oversight?

What kinds of knowledge-  
increasing activities are we talking  
about?

# Data-Guided Management of Health Care Delivery

- Quality assurance
- Program evaluation
- Cost containment
- Quality improvement
- Health services research
- Outcomes monitoring/research

Why engage in these activities?

# Ethical Duties of Health Care Providers

- Provide care that meets basic quality standards
- Be good stewards of scarce resources
- Continually strive to improve the quality of care they provide
- Help patients make informed treatment decisions
- Share knowledge with others in the health care system to improve care

What protections do people affected by these activities need?

# Ethical Requirements

The activity should meet basic ethical requirements for the protection of human participants in knowledge-increasing activities.

(e.g. See table of ethical requirements for QI activities.)

# Informed Consent for Patient Participant

- Background consent to inclusion in minimal risk knowledge-seeking activities as part of consent to treatment
- Informed consent to inclusion in a specific activity that represents more than minimal risk
- Patient risk is measured relative to risk in standard health care
- Confidentiality is protected

# Informed Consent for Health Worker Participant

- Informed consent to inclusion in specific knowledge-seeking activity that represents more than minimal risk to worker BUT
- Worker risk is measured relative to risk in usual work situation and DOES NOT INCLUDE risk that the activity will show the worker to be incompetent or unnecessary

# Practical Implications for Ethical Oversight

- Focus on ethical conduct of activities, not form of ethical review
- Integrate ethical oversight into system of accountability for clinical care delivery
- Encourage “hybrid” activities
- Encourage knowledge-sharing

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