

# Medical News

**Exclusive Opinion Roundup**

Monday, May 22, 1967

## **Authorities View Problems in Ethics, Call Testings in Children Imperative**

*Medical News Report*

AUTHORITIES on ethical problems of medical investigation using human beings, especially patients in institutional settings, agree in a MEDICAL NEWS survey of their opinions that the use of volunteers under strict codes requiring informed

consent is imperative but express disquiet at suggestions that lay persons be given a voice on review committees.

The opinions were gathered following a furor caused in medical circles early this year by charges of unethical experimentation made by New York State Senator Seymour Thaler against several New York City hospitals and institutions, and his introduction in the State Legislature of a proposal to sharply restrict in-

### **First of two articles**

vestigational procedures utilizing volunteers. A report on the factual background was published in MEDICAL NEWS ("Studies With Children Backed on Medical, Ethical Grounds," an exclusive report on the Willowbrook Hepatitis Project, February 27).

All the authorities agreed that the use of volunteers is imperative; that, in the words of Dr. Dorothy M. Horstmann, Professor of Epidemiology and Pediatrics, Yale University, "to prohibit the use of volunteers in medical research would mean the end of progress in the control of many diseases which still cause much suffering throughout the world."

The physicians also agreed that tests on children are imperative if childhood diseases are to be conquered, but there was some uneasiness regarding not only the physical and mental but legal consequences, regardless of "informed consent" of parents or guardians.



DR. HORSTMANN

Most of the authorities who touched on the advisability of including lay persons on review committees agreed that intelligent, informed lay opinion could be valuable, though agreement was tinged in several cases with the feeling that it might be a reflection on the integrity of physicians.

Dr. Louis Lasagna, of the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, commented that "no investigator should be conducting research which he is ashamed to discuss with laymen."