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BOOK REVIEW

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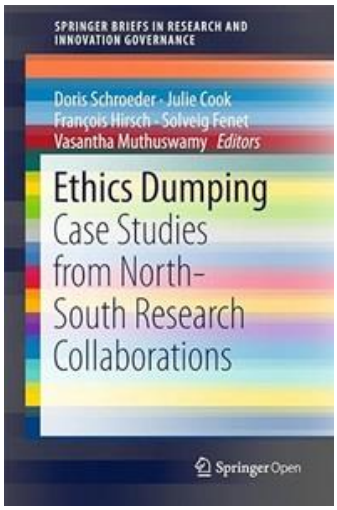
Ethics Dumping: Case Studies from North-South Research Collaborations Edited by Doris Schroeder, Julie Cook, François Hirch, Solveig Fenet, and Vasantha Muthuswami



Ethics Dumping: Case Studies from North-South Research Collaborations
edited by Doris Schroeder, Julie Cook, François Hirch, Solveig Fenet, and Vasantha Muthuswami (2018)
Springer, ISBN 978-3319647302, Pp. 134

Ethics dumping is an ongoing practice in collaborative research. Despite the existence of ethical review boards, some notable discrepancy in governance and integration persists. This paper is a chronological book review of a 15-chapter book titled, *"Ethics Dumping: Case Studies from North-South Research Collaborations,"* compiled from individual authors and edited by Schroeder, Cook, Hirch, Fenet, and Muthuswami in 2018. This book review aims to ensure ever-increasing attention to the numerous ways of ethics dumping and incite further research into the matter. The book is a must-read for researchers, ethicists, policymakers in research institutions, and students (especially graduate students).

Often than not, researchers from High-Income Countries (HICs) are eager to engage in such collaborations in the Low-Middle Income Countries (Glenn et al. 2021), this is due to stringent measures back home that would not permit some research practices in high-income countries; a situation known as 'ethics dumping'.

The first chapter of the book provide a comprehensive background on the subject, aiming to establish a foundation for the subsequent chapters and guide readers through the forthcoming content.

In the second chapter is a case study that revolves around unexpected research findings regarding health-seeking behaviours, which unveiled instances of illegal female genital mutilation within a community. Unfortunately, public disclosure of these findings inadvertently resulted in the stigmatization of participants and their cultural practices. The community felt betrayed because the research did not address their needs and priorities.

The third chapter discusses the risks of exploiting vulnerable populations in genomic research and highlights the significance of obtaining respectful and genuine informed consent beforehand. The chapter features a case study on the San population, having one of the oldest human DNAs and a sought-after group for genomic research studies, resulting in research findings with sensitive information that had detrimental effects on the community.

Chapter 4 stands apart from the others due to its unique approach. It takes the form of a personal narrative by Tukai who shares his first-hand experience as an external support worker who engaged with sex workers living in the Majengo slum. Tukai acknowledges that "there are obvious issues around informed consent and the possible exploitation of the sex workers in the studies that constantly have to be dealt with" (p. 28).

Chapter 5 elaborates on a study of a clinical trial that took place in India at three sites between 1998 and 2015. The design for the trial placed the participants at significant risk. 'These trials would never have been granted ethical approval in the USA or France, the countries of the sponsors and collaborators' (p. 42).

The 6th chapter is about the phase I/II Ebola candidate vaccine clinical trial. This trial was conducted as a randomized double-blinded study across multiple sites in different countries which faced public protests leading to the suspension of the trial. The authors highlight critical ethical concerns relating to the violation of research participants, notable is the inadequate informed consent process.

The 7th chapter deals with a case study where the covert way female participants were recruited into a research study demonstrates disrespect for their autonomy. This study

raised ethical issues of confidentiality, improper promises of benefits, reproductive rights violations, an absence of insurance, gender inequity and not being considerate in utilising participant's private time.

In Chapter 8, the authors shed light on the ethical complexities surrounding clinical trials involving healthy volunteers. Drawing insights from literature and informal discussions, the authors emphasize the differences between healthy volunteers in high-income countries (HICs) and those in resource-limited settings.

Chapter 9 focuses on a study conducted in China's Anhui province, where a collaborative effort between a US university, the Chinese Government, and local research institutes undertook a genetic study. This study amassed a significant amount of genetic material from Chinese villagers, with the US collaborators deriving substantial benefits while the Chinese community and participants received minimal gains. The authors attribute this situation to "inadequate management and regulatory systems, lack of substantive ethical review, and insufficient awareness of the need to protect rights and interests during that period" (p. 77).

The 10th chapter examines a case involving the utilization of non-human animals in scientific studies. Within this context, the research pertains to experiments carried out on baboons captured from the wild in Africa by a researcher from the UK. The primary ethical dilemmas arise due to the origin of the baboons sourced from their natural habitat and the potential variance in animal welfare standards in Kenya.

Chapter 11 presents a case in which a trial was to be conducted in a North American university to test the safety and efficacy of a genetically modified (GM) banana fortified with beta-carotene to address Vitamin A deficiency issues in Uganda. The study faced several ethics infractions, including disregard for informed consent, participants' safety, local and cultural systems, and potential threats to banana biodiversity.

Chapter 12 highlights the need for cautious use of mobile devices in health research due to data security issues and the risk of violating participants' privacy and confidentiality. An example is, an app developed for HIV/AIDS counselling in South Africa raised concerns about data synchronization and privacy.

Chapter 13 addresses general concerns about safety and security in using CRISPR/Cas9' technologies in research. The potential risks are higher in developing nations with loose governance systems, leading to concerns about ethics dumping as noted by the authors.

Chapter 14 involves research about Ebola Virus survivors in Liberia without ethical clearance. In this case study, the researcher sought ethics approval after data collection which is unprofessional and unacceptable in research.

The last chapter describes a clinical trial conducted by a foreign pharmaceutical company in China with approval by a hospital's ethics board, where a participant experienced a Serious Adverse Event (SAE). In our assessment, the ethics review process might have faced a conflict of interest which led to a lack of due diligence, as the hospital was a partner to the pharmaceutical company.

This book's significance is in demonstrating the struggles of ethics in cross-regional research partnerships and the likelihood of violation of ethical standards in such engagement. Researchers, policymakers, funders, research institutions, regulatory bodies, government agencies, research governing bodies and students interested in the ethical aspects of multinational research undertakings will find this book a valuable and interesting read.

References

Glenn, G.S., Sonavane, S., & Sharma. N. (2021). Ethics dumping and India's unfortunate history. *Global Bioethics Enquiry,* 9(2).

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