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The film entitled, "The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks”, depicts the experience of the African-American woman named Henrietta Lacks who died of cervical cancer (Wolfe & Skloot, 2017). The story was written by the journalist Rebecca Skloot whereby she characterized how the harvested cells of Lacks lead to the advancement of medical research. Overall, the entire movie illustrated how ethical dilemmas arouse due to the fact that the cells being used for the research were collected without Lacks’ full knowledge.

The story of Lacks raised numerous ethical issues including failure to obtain an informed consent, and inadequacy to protect patient’s privacy and confidentiality. As an illustration, when Lacks was admitted to John Hopkins Hospital for her treatment, Lacks’ cells were collected without her knowledge that the specimens will be used for research. The doctors used her cells to create “HeLa” (for Henrietta Lacks), the first immortal human cells that led to many groundbreaking scientific discoveries of the twenty-first century. Then, the researchers published the results in public database without concealing Lacks’ identity. This had affected Lacks’ and her family’s privacy. Aside from these, Skloot found out that the Lacks Family did not understand what Lacks’ cells had contributed in the scientific research, and they did not receive financial benefits and even continued to live in poverty with limited access to healthcare.

In sum, the presentation of the life of Henrietta Lacks and her condition explicitly showed that back in those days, medical research were done without appropriate research ethics compared to what is being done nowadays. However, looking at the good side of the story, if not for Henrietta Lacks’ cells, the breakthrough findings on medical research would have not occurred. The publication of her story helped in diagnosing, and treating disorders and diseases.

References

Wolfe, G. C. (Director), & Skloot, R. (Writer). (2017, June 13). *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*. Retrieved October 20, 2017, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=18th6>\_BRNrc