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**DEN 2311- Oral Pathology**

**Assignment: CITI IRB Essay**

**Prof. Dr Gwen Cohen Brown**

As a student of health sciences since I was in high school, reading about human studies is something I have learned to be a straightforward process. If you need to know if a drug or treatment works, it needs to be tested before it can be given to the general population. Although I knew there were general ethical guidelines, I was not aware of the complexity and implications of the selection process. Through the CITI IRB certification, I had the opportunity to learn more about the historical background and current guidelines to protect human subjects.

In regards to the historical background, what struck the most, was to learn how many people (generally those in socioeconomic and ethnic disadvantage) had to suffer and even die before official laws were put in place to protect them. Stories about how the Nazi conducted inhumane medical experiments in concentration camps are widely known. However, I was really surprised to read that situations like that happened in the United States.

The Tuskegee study is one heartbreaking example on how researchers took advantage of a specific population to conduct unethical research. In this study, a group of African American men were offered free medical care if they participated in a study to treat “bad blood”, when in reality, researchers were studying the effects of untreated syphilis. Even when they discovered Penicillin was effective against Syphilis, the researchers withheld treatment from the subjects for several years, which led to the death of some of the participants.

Fortunately, nowadays there are specific guidelines when it comes to selecting human subjects for research. The Belmont report is the current reference for this. The principles of this report are respect for persons, beneficence, and justice. These principles are to protect the human subjects’ autonomy by providing appropriate benefits and avoid unethical biases.

After graduating as a Dental Hygienist, I would like to be involved in research within the dental field in order to take oral health to the next level. Knowing what I learned during this certification will help me have a more thorough knowledge and considerations when conducting research on human subjects.

