Research ethics and ethical principles

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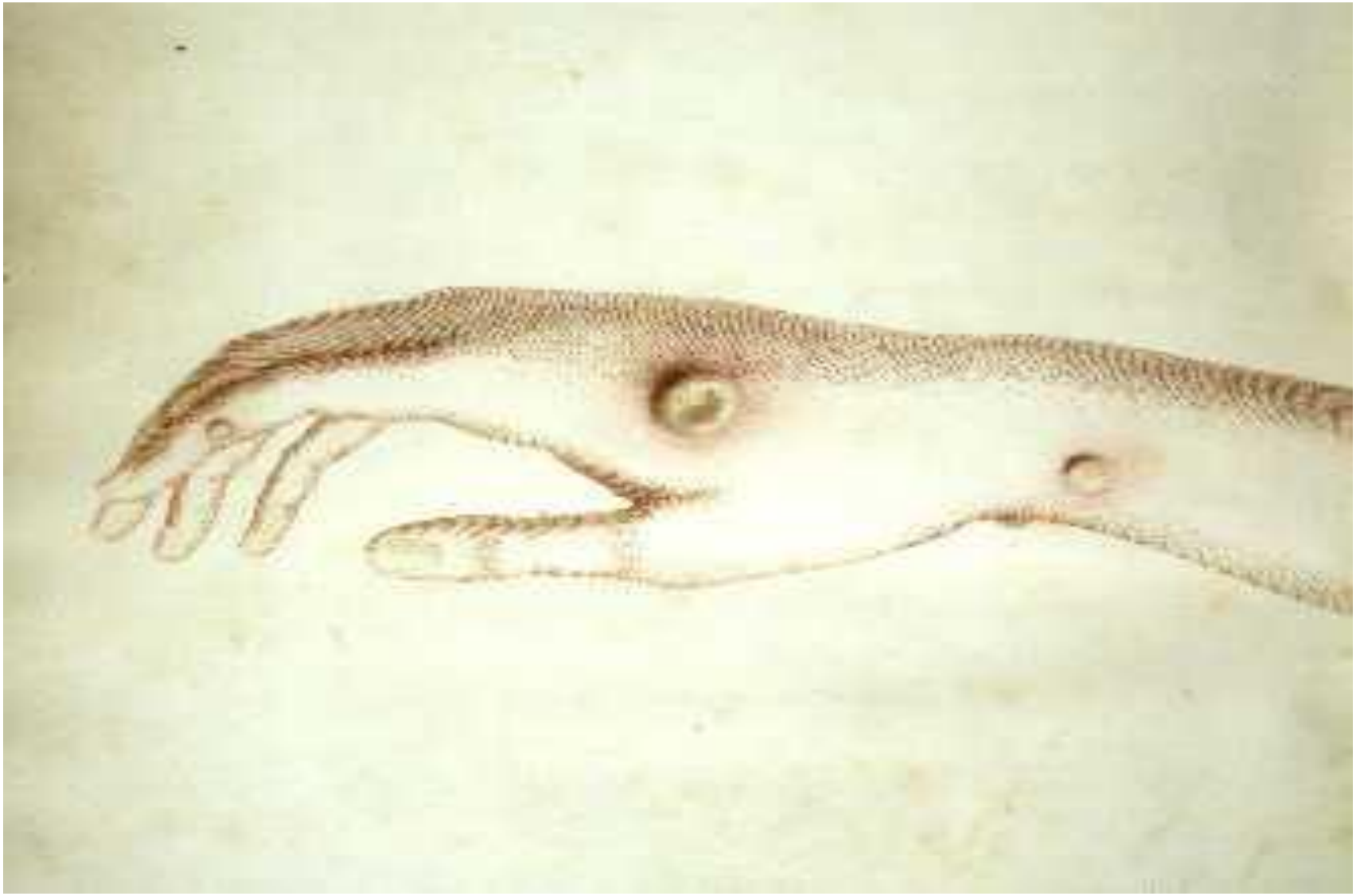

http://www.takealot.com/nikon-10x42-aculon-a211-binoculars/PLID30765979?gclid=COXz6YqamdMCFfMW0wodWdkD0A

Source of images:
http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/empire_seapower/smallpox_02.shtml

Outline of presentation

- What is Research Ethics?
- Why Research Ethics?
  - Malpractices in health research
- Ethical Principles
  - Protection of humans in research (initially)
- Implementation of ethical principles
  - Ethical codes/guidelines
  - Ethics review committees
  - Legal frameworks
  - Etc.
  - Virtuous researchers
- Concluding remarks

What is research ethics?

‘Defining’ Research Ethics

- One person on an island that is not owned by anybody
- Second person emerges
- ‘Limited freedom’
- Normative standards/ethics

‘Defining’ Research Ethics

- Animal/s living on an island
- Normative standards/ethics
- Animals are not moral agents
- Humans are moral agents responsible for
  - welfare of animals
  - the environment

Some fields related to Ethics

- Human rights and civics
- Religion
- Customs and traditions
- Law

Why Research Ethics?

Why bother about Research Ethics?

- Past atrocities, harms and abuses
  - Eg Nazi human abuses, Tuskegee case in USA, etc.
  - Contemporary malpractices in health research

- Global economies have become knowledge-driven hence research is critical
  - Ethics, justice and fair play are likely to be swept under the carpet

- Individuals, communities, nations, environment, animals, etc. may be harmed by research
  - Knowingly or unknowingly
  - Directly or indirectly

Nazi human abuses and atrocities

Jews, gypsies, Poles, Russians, etc. (war prisoners):

- **High-altitude** (low-pressure) experiments: put prisoners in low-pressure tanks, how long could they survive with little oxygen?, autopsies followed
- **Freezing exp**.: force prisoners to remain outdoors, naked, freezing, 9-14 hrs; or put in freezing water 3hrs; try re-warming bodies
- **Malaria exp**.: infect prisoners, give drugs, many died
- **Typhus exp**. Inject prisoners with antityphus "vaccine". Then infect with typhus; controls: infect with typhus no treatment;

Nazi human abuses and atrocities

- **Mustard Gas Expt**: inhale mg; try various treatments;
- **Poison expt**: feed patients various poisons, many died; kill survivors for autopsy;
- **'Creating' Siamese twins**: twins sewed together
- **'Pathology expts' using twins**: infected one twin with "germs". When s/he died, the other twin was killed and their organs were compared
- **Cross transfusions**: To "make boys into girls and girls into boys"

International codes/guidelines

- Nazi trials were done from 1946 to 1947
  - 'Researchers' were convicted and sentenced
- Nuremburg Code was developed in 1947
  - Voluntary consent to participate in research
  - Risk-benefit analysis of research (before it is done)
  - Etc
- Other international codes developed
  - Declaration of Helsinki, CIOMS, etc.
- Ethics for studies not involving humans
  - Animal research ethics, Bio-safety, etc.

Ethical Principles

- There are 4 fundamental ethical principles
- Principle of autonomy
- Principle of beneficence
- Principle of non-maleficence
- Principle of justice

Principle of autonomy

- Autonomy: Derived from Greek words “autos” (self) and “nomos” (rule)
- Self-rule or self-determination
- Basis of informed consent
- Pre-conditions: competence (the capacity to be a moral agent) and liberty or freedom to be autonomous

Principles of beneficence and non-maleficence

- Beneficence: doing good and maximising benefits

- Non-maleficence: not doing any harm to others

- Two sides of the same coin: though non-maleficence may be the minimum, it may be inadequate on its own

Principle of justice

- Fairness in selection of participants

- Fairness in sharing of risks of research and benefits of the research

Thank you