Human Experimentation Rampant in the United States

In an article in the New Republic in December, 1998, former UNSCOM leader Scott Ritter decried Iraq’s chemical and biological weapons experiments on human subjects. Wrote Ritter,

“We had received credible intelligence that 95 political prisoners had been transferred from the Abu Ghraib Prison to a site in western Iraq, where they had been subjected to lethal testing under the supervision of a special unit from the Military Industrial Commission, under Saddam’s personal authority.”

The stance of the United States and her allies has always been that such experiments bear the watermark of a brutal dictatorship and are never engaged in by the free world.

So when Abu Ghraib again hit the news in 2004, concerning the ongoing torture of prisoners by US forces, the US was swift to act in condemning the reports as constituting isolated incidents and not reflective of US policy.

And then the floodgates opened, with more revelations of torture, CIA “black sites” waterboarding and prisoner rape. And torture became a topic of heated debate.

Those who torture would like you to think that they do not, or that torture is necessary for reasons of “National Security.” However, any first year medical student can tell you that torture is unnecessary to gain confessions, which is the fall-back used by government officials to explain its necessity. All that is needed to obtain such ostensibly highly valued confessions is a good dose of sodium pentothal or another such chemical in the array of truth serum drugs.

What one gains by the use of torture is false confessions. False confessions would be highly valued in the continuing “war on terrorism,” to provide proof that acts of terror are being perpetrated by those who are detained.

Abu Ghraib may or may not have been the locus of experiments by the Iraqi leadership. What is certain is that the US is engaged in experiments on its own people, without informed consent, some of which achieve the definition of torture.

The US Continues to Evade the Mandates of Informed Consent

The issue of informed consent was central to the The Doctors Trials at Nuremberg, where twenty German doctors who experimented on Jews and others, often fatally, were tried and sentenced. What emerged from the Trials was the Nuremberg Code, which mandates that experimental subjects be given information about the nature of the experiment and the right to refuse.

The Nuremberg Code, however, remains a recommendation, not a law.
Some of these current experiments run by the United States are taking place within the borders of the US and some are taking place in foreign countries, with pharmaceutical and defense agencies as primary perpetrators.

As an act of apparent damage control following the 1994 disclosures of US radiation experiments during the Cold War, President Bill Clinton produced a memo, lodged in the Federal Register, calling for strengthened protections for human subjects.

These radiation experiments exposed US citizens to high levels of radiation, without informing them of the risks. According to reports, the radiation caused the deaths of a number of the experimental subjects.

Clinton subsequently established an Advisory Committee on Human Radiation Experiments to review reports and recommend ways to prevent further unethical research from taking place in the future. The Advisory Committee’s recommendations included mandating informed consent of all human subjects, among other recommendations. **However, the Committee’s recommendations were never acted upon. And informed consent, which constitutes the core of the Nuremberg Code, was never codified into law.**

**Obama Perpetuates the Myth of Legal Protections for Test Subjects**

Fast forward to 2010, when another embarrassing experimental project, this time launched by the US Public Health Service in Guatemala, hit the front pages of newspapers. US researchers were reported as deliberately infecting over 1500 human subjects in Guatemala with sexually transmitted diseases. This study took place back in the 1940’s and was effectively covered up for over sixty years.

In response to this disclosure, President Obama directed the Presidential Commission for the Study of Bioethical Issues to “determine if Federal regulations and international standards adequately guard the health and well-being of participants in scientific studies supported by the Federal Government.”

The Commission reported back in December of 2011 with their conclusions that the current US rules would deter such abuses from taking place again.

The Commission failed to take note that research protocols, classified and otherwise, are lacking an informed consent requirement. What this means is that if, for example, an intelligence agency decides to run an experiment using human subjects, that intelligence agency can waive any necessity to inform the subjects and to gain their consent.

The Commission’s report is largely a whitewash. In light of the following facts, it is clear that US nonconsensual human experimentation is rampant. Some of these experiments appear to be classified and some not. In many cases, neither the classified research nor non classified protocols appear to be abiding by the stated need for informed consent.

**Children as Lab Rats**

On January 4, 2002, President Bush signed into law the Best Pharmaceuticals for Children Act, which provides incentives for using children in drug trials. The Act offered pharmaceutical companies a six-month exclusivity term in return for their agreement to conduct pediatric tests on drugs. This Act was quickly followed in 2003 by the Pediatric Research Equity Act (PREA). PREA authorizes FDA to require manufacturers of new drug and biologics products to conduct pediatric studies in certain circumstances.

As a result, drug trials on children have gone through the roof.

An article at medicalkidnap.com states that: “In 2006, they found that there were approximately 45,000 children participating in experiments.”

According to Victor Yeung, who is with the Centre for Paediatric Pharmacy Research, The School of Pharmacy, at the University of London, over 50% of medicines used on children are not licensed for use either for the stated disease or for the age group.

As it eventuates, the US government is playing fast and hard with informed consent where children are involved. On the surface, it appears that parents must provide consent for children to be enrolled in drug trials. As it plays out in the real world, however, this is not always the case. Parents are often not given adequate information as to the nature of the drug experiments. And in other cases, when the parents raise questions about their children’s medical care, they may find the children taken from them by Department of Children Services. In some cases, they may even
have their parental rights terminated by a court.

In 2013, Justina Pelletier was removed from her parents after an emergency trip to the hospital. Justina, who suffers from a rare mitochondrial disease, was re-diagnosed by a new intern at Boston Hospital with “somatoform disorder,” after her parents took her to the Emergency Room with what appeared to be a bad case of the flu. The diagnosis of “somatoform disorder” is a psychiatric diagnosis, which essentially stated that Justina’s disease was “all in her head.” Her parents were unhappy with Boston Hospital’s treatment plan and also with their failure to even consult with her regular doctors and refused to sign off on BH’s treatment plan.

At that point, the hospital notified DCF (aka Child Protective Services) and the Pelletiers were effectively blocked from further unsupervised contact with their daughter. Justina was placed in a locked psychiatric unit and Lou Pelletier was charged with contempt of court for speaking about her circumstances to a Boston Globe reporter.

After an extended court battle and after her plight made national news, Justina was finally returned to her parents’ care. Concerns that she may have been used in experimental drug trials continue.

The Pelletiers are suing Boston Children’s Hospital.

A similar playbook was used against Melissa Diegel, an Arizona mother of two daughters also diagnosed with a rare mitochondrial disease. Diegel has now lost her parental rights after she questioned the treatment plan for her daughters, which was put into place by Phoenix Children’s Hospital and Translational Genomics Research Institute.

In court proceedings fraught with secrecy, removal of witnesses from the courtroom, sealed records and attempts to cast Diegel as someone who had “overmedicalized” her two daughters, Judge Kristin Hoffman severed all parental rights of Melissa Diegel and ordered the two girls to be put up for adoption.

As in the case of Justina Pelletier, where her parents were deemed unfit for following the recommendations of the primary physician and not honoring the diagnosis of a new doctor, the Diegel case reveals efforts by Child Protective Services to demonize Melissa Diegel for following one doctor’s recommendations for treatment for her two daughters, rather than following the recommendations of another doctor.

Melissa Diegel states that Hanna and Kayla were enrolled in TGen drug trials.

The willingness of courts to interfere with parental rights when the children in question can be used for drug trials reveals a systemic imperative wherein science will trump the welfare of individual children. At the center of such experimental imperatives lies organizations such as TGen.

Translational Genomics Research Institute (TGen) is situated in a modern, multi-story building in Phoenix Arizona. It was established in 2002 by Dr. Jeffrey Trent, who served for 10 years as the Scientific Director of the National Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in Bethesda, Maryland, prior to founding TGen.

TGen’s promotional literature states that: “TGen is on the cutting edge of translational research where investigators are able to unravel the genetic components of common and complex diseases. Working with collaborators in the scientific and medical communities, TGen believes it can make a substantial contribution to the efficiency and effectiveness of the translational process. TGen’s vision is of a world where an understanding of genomic variation can be rapidly translated to the diagnosis and treatment of disease in a manner tailored to individual patients.”

However, TGen may also be involved in nonconsensual human experimentation. This reporter has uncovered documentation that the Institute maintains agreements with Phoenix Children’s Hospital to refer sick children to the Institute. According to a grant proposal from TGen researcher Dr. Justin Hunter, “Dr. Saunder Bernes, senior pediatric neurologist at Phoenix Children’s Hospital (PCH), has agreed to refer Arizona residents with NMD for these studies (see attached letter of support).” The grant was awarded to Dr. Hunter on October 23, 2014.

As at least two sick children, Hanna and Kayla Diegel, were “referred” to TGen with disastrous results for their family unit, one might question whether or not TGen’s research programs regularly result in terminating family rights.

PCH has continued to deny any such relationship with TGen, even in light of the documents which have surfaced.

TGen maintains numerous contracts with the federal government, including defense contracts. One of these contracts involves sequencing the genome of Burkholderia pseudomallei, which constitutes a Class B bioterror
threat.

One of the problems with terminating the parental rights of experimental subjects is that reliable information as to what sorts of experiments are taking place becomes difficult to obtain.

Officials at TGen did not respond to calls from this reporter.

**Creating the “Perfect Spy”**

Using children as lab rats is not the only human experimentation issue that has reared its head in recent years. Following the Congressional Church Hearings of the 1970's, the US government’s program to create the “perfect spy,” dubbed MKULTRA, was allegedly disbanded.

However, mind control experiments have continued, apparently unabated. After hearing testimony from a number of individuals alleging that they are being electronically harassed with mind-invasive technologies, the President’s Bioethics Commission issued a letter stating that it would not investigate such allegations. The letter states that “We would like to clarify for your information that the Commission is not investigating or reviewing any concerns or complaints concerning complaints about.....MKULTRA; COINTELPRO; electromagnetic torture or attacks; organized stalking; remove influencing; microwave harassment; covert harassment and surveillance; human tracking; psychotromic (sic) or psychotropic weapons and radio frequency or military weapons or other claims.”

Recent articles at such mainstream media sources as businessinsider.com have confirmed the existence of such electromagnetic weaponry. Project Censored, which operates out of Sonoma State University in California, has published a report confirming the existence of neurobiological weapons, directed acoustic weapons, electromagnetic crowd control weapons, pulsed energy projectiles and neural implants, all of which mirror the concerns and testimony of thousands of US citizens who are now alleging that these weapons have been covertly and nonconsensually tested on them.

**Justice is Elusive for Test Subjects**

The US continues to hold itself up as the leader of the “free world,” even in the face of such abuses of its own citizenry. As the US refuses to honor what one spokesperson called “an ‘unaccountable’ World Court,” chances for those used as test subjects and denied their stated rights to informed consent in experiments to obtain justice remain slim. A lawsuit launched in 2009 on the behalf of military personnel used as chemical and biological test subjects by the US Army at Edgewood and Ft. Detrick military bases has resulted in a decision by a federal court judge that the Army should keep the subjects informed about “health information relating to their participation in chemical and biological tests spanning five decades.” No monetary damages were sought in the lawsuit. In light of the damage to the health of individuals who took part in the experiments-- without adequate information as to what the experiments constituted--one might wonder if the best that can be obtained after a seven year court battle is an agreement to share such “health information” with the victims.

Tellingly, Bill Clinton’s memo of 1997 states the following: “This memorandum is not intended to create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law by a party against the United States, its agencies, its officers, or any other persons.

Writing for mindjustice.org, attorney Cheryl Welsh states that

“...until a federal statute that secures the right of informed consent for anyone subjected to classified human experimentation is passed by the legislature and signed into law by the president, the U.S. government has the power to carry out research projects without his consent and without informing the participants of the dangers or future complications.”

Any questions? Sadly, the US government won’t be answering them...for the time being, anyway.

*Janet C. Phelan, investigative journalist and human rights defender that has traveled pretty extensively over the Asian region, an author of a tell-all book EXILE, exclusively for the online magazine “New Eastern Outlook”.*