Medicine after the Holocaust: Knowledge for Today

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Acknowledgements
A Different Paradigm for the Holocaust: National Health Care Policy

Applied Biology
Sterilization Law
Nuremberg Laws
Child Euthanasia
Adult T4 Euthanasia
Medical Expts
Final Solution
You Are Sharing the Load! A Genetically Ill Individual Costs Approximately 50,000 Reichsmarks by the Age of Sixty.

Applied Biology: Eugenics (Rassenhygiene)
A Brief History of Eugenics

Socrates               Darwin                    Galton               Mendel
Dr. Eduard Pernkopf, Dean, U. Vienna School of Medicine

Gleichschaltung: eugenics, academic faculty promotions, political power, employment, textbooks, theses
"You, you National Socialist doctors, I cannot do without you for a single day, not a single hour. If not for you, if you fail me, then all is lost."

Adolf Hitler
Physicians Were Pioneers, Not Pawns

- Eugenics or racial hygiene (*rassenhygiene*) was broadly accepted in Germany for decades.

- 2786 physicians joined the National Socialist Physicians’ League before 1933.

- >38,000 physicians (almost 50% of all MDs) joined the Nazi party by the end of WWII.

- >7% of MDs were members of the SS (compared with <0.5% of the general population).
“The needle belongs in the hands of the physician.”
Nazi medicine claimed the moral high ground by transforming the Hippocratic doctor-patient relationship into a state-\textit{Volkskörper} (nation’s body) relationship.
“THE BOOK IS MY BIBLE”
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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>US</th>
<th>GERMANY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Slave labor</td>
<td>1641 Massachusetts</td>
<td>Late 1930s</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anti-miscegenation laws</td>
<td>1876 (“one drop” rule)</td>
<td>1935 (1/8 rule)</td>
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<td>Sterilization law</td>
<td>1907 Indiana</td>
<td>1933</td>
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<td>Euthanasia</td>
<td>1915 Dr. Haiselden</td>
<td>1938</td>
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<td>Immigration laws</td>
<td>1924 Johnson Act</td>
<td>1930s</td>
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<td>Medical experiments</td>
<td>1932-1972 Tuskegee</td>
<td>Late 1930s</td>
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Presidents Wilson and T. Roosevelt, Alexander Graham Bell, Nobel Laureate Alexis Carrel, presidents of Harvard (Eliot) and Stanford (Jordan), 8/9 justices of SCOTUS, philanthropists Carnegie and Rockefeller, Margaret Sanger (founder of Planned Parenthood)
Kaiser Wilhelm Institute of Anthropology, Human Heredity, and Eugenics in Berlin

Philanthropy: Rockefeller Foundation, Mengele Training, Eyes
American Medical Research and the Nuremberg Code
(Nuremberg Doctors’ Trial 12/9/46-7/9/47)

Neglect until Beecher’s 1966 NEJM article and the 1972 public revelation of the 1932-1972 Tuskegee Syphilis Study
The 1978 Belmont Report’s Human Subjects Research Principles → IRBs

- Respect for persons (a norm of respecting the decision-making capacities of autonomous persons)
- Beneficence (a group of norms for providing benefits to and balancing benefits against risks and costs)
  - Nonmaleficence (a norm of avoiding the causation of harm)
- Justice (a group of norms for distributing benefits, risk, and costs fairly)
Clinical Medical and Health Care Policy
Myths about Medicine and the Holocaust

- Coerced/Few in number
- Incompetent/Mad/Sadistic
- Ideas out of the mainstream
- (No scientific rationale for experiments)
- Policies were legally, morally, and ethically indefensible
  - Those performing evil acts cannot be motivated by ethical beliefs.
- We are not Nazis
  - Neither liberal democracies nor American physicians are capable of doing such evil
Who is the “Angel of Death”?

Dr. Irmfried Eberl

Dr. Josef Mengele
“I was very lucky my parents could afford to send me to Germany for a surgical residency during the Third Reich...there was simply nothing in the United States comparable to the prestigious universities in Germany.” Dr. Michael E. DeBakey, May 16, 2008
What Are We Not Teaching in “Germanized” American Medical Schools?
American Clinical Medicine and Health Care Policy
Response to the Nuremberg Doctors’ Trial

- Eugenics transformed into medical genetics.
- Eugenicists became population control experts.
- Sterilizations in the US continue until 1981
- Military medical ethics (radiation, Abu Ghraib)
I swear by Apollo the Physician and by Asclepius and by Health (the god Hygieia) and Panacea and by all the gods as well as goddesses, making them judges (witnesses), to bring the following oath and written covenant to fulfillment, in accordance with my power and my judgment;

“I do solemnly swear, by whatever I hold most sacred;”
Transforming the Traditional Hippocratic Oath to the AAMC’s Oath That Bears the Name of Hippocrates

“And I will not give a drug that is deadly to anyone if asked (for it), nor will I suggest the way to such counsel. And likewise I will not give a woman a destructive pessary. And in a pure and holy way I will guard my life and techné.”

“That I will exercise my profession solely for the cure of my patients, and will give no drug, perform no operation, for a criminal purpose, even if solicited, far less suggest it;”
Bioethics: Principlism, The Hippocratic Oath, Traditional Religious, Other

*Principles of Biomedical Ethics* focuses on principles derived from philosophy:

“Although major writings in ancient, medieval, and modern health care contain a rich storehouse of reflection on the relationship between the professional and the patient, these writing are inadequate for contemporary biomedical ethics.”

Principlism is applied to all of Health Care Ethics, not just human subjects research as in Belmont Report.
VI. 1. *Ancient Attitudes.* “…Ancient religion did not bar abortion.”

VI. 2. *The Hippocratic Oath.* “Dr. Edelstein concludes that the Oath originated in…only a small segment of Greek opinion…The emerging teachings of Christianity were in agreement with the Pythagorean ethic…Thus, suggests Dr. Edelstein, it is ‘a Pythagorean manifesto, and not the expression of an absolute standard of medical conduct.’”
The US Is the Only Judeo-Christian and the Most Religious Nation in the Western World
Edmund D. Pellegrino, MD

Review of 3,000-Page Transcript of Nuremberg Doctors’ Trial
Nazi Doctors’ Justifications

- They were morally neutral bystanders
- The laws of the state superceded medical ethics
- Genocide and human experimentations were for the good of the state
- Their acts were really “compassionate”
- Medical ethics must adjust to the times
- They acted on orders
- It was common practice everywhere in the world to do experiments without consent
LIFE nonmaleficence beneficence justice

nonmaleficence beneficence

EUGENICS nonmaleficence beneficence justice

AUTONOMY nonmaleficence beneficence justice

MORAL PREMISES, SCOPE, QUALITY OF LIFE vs. LIFE, RIGHTS vs. DUTIES, AUTONOMY vs. PATERNALISM, CONTRACT vs. COVENANT, LEGAL vs. ETHICAL, WHO DECIDES, HOW TO DECIDE
Health Care Policy: Why Didn’t the US Proceed Down the Slippery Slope?

- **Federalism vs. Führerprinzip:**
  - Compare Buck v. Bell to Roe v. Wade
  - Is Washington v. Glucksberg the final word on assisted suicide?

- **Pluralism vs. Gleichschaltung:**
  - Live Free or Die (New Hampshire state motto)
  - Don’t Tread on Me (Gadsden or Hopkins Flag)

- **Religion:**
  - Catholic Church was in the forefront of the fight against involuntary sterilization
“We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among them are the life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” 

We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their State with certain unalienable rights, that among them are quality of life, autonomy, and happiness.
Mark Twain:

“History does not necessarily repeat itself but it often rhymes.”
MEDICINE AFTER THE HOLOCAUST

Knowledge for Today