

R – 7 scandal –
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The breakthrough of the century could have been the Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) or more commonly termed as R - 7. With two and a half years of research, Dr. Cliff Bannaker has worked on this virus from its very conception up to its ' coming out' at Glass-Mendelssohn laboratory. This particular drug is banked on as the possible cure to cancer. The Glass-Mendelssohn laboratory is at the heart of Harvard University's Philpott Institute. The Director is Dr. Sandy Glass, whose given name is Sam Glazeroff, who is a descendant of Eastern European Jews.

On the other hand, his co- director Marrion Mendelssohn, is a product of Franz Applebaum at Columbia. This is also where she met her husband Jacob, who in turn was a researcher - turned professor, now teaching microbiology at a local college. Dr. Cliff Bannaker is one of the most promising young doctors from Stanford. He was under the mentoring of the deceased Professor Oppenheimer. He is a son of Los Angeles store owners, who are both are college degree holders. He has been in the laboratory for three years being hired under the recommendations of Professor Oppenheimer.

The laboratory is staffed with a few post - doctorate degree holders and two laboratory technicians. The doctor's are Dr. Robin Drecker, Dr. Xiang Feng, Dr. Prithwish and the man who created the virus Dr. Cliff Bannaker. Their qualified laboratory technicians are Aidan and Natalya. The RVS was first introduced by Bannaker during his entry in the laboratory. He was given the opportunity to do his research. Such project initially showcased high potential for turning cancer cells into normal ones but it is worthy to note that this was not the only research done within the laboratory.

However, even if this one has the highest prospect, there was a failure on the initial experiment with live subjects. With such, the directors had advised Bannaker to stop his experiment on RSV and work with fellow doctor Drecker, who is also Bannaker's girlfriend. However, with intractable spirit (or frankly insubordination), Bannaker continued to inject live subjects, in this case- mice, with the virus. The RSV's second attempt found several nude mice, which are those that do not have hair due to some disorder, that did not have the cancerous tumors after the injection of RSV.

This was found by Dr. Feng who is the laboratory's record keeper and the co-director Mendelssohn. The initial reaction is to 'hide' this from the director Glass. Nevertheless, this was also subsequently revealed. The restless but close to unproductive laboratory, with contagious glee probably from their director, eagerly proceeded with an announcement. With whirlwind speed, the research findings were published in a scientific journal, Nature. The laboratory gained publicity and funding for the venture. Consequently, the laboratory started its own quandary.

The doctors who tried to replicate the results were unsuccessful. Thus, suspicion ignited in each in every doctor who tried unsuccessfully. The suspicions of the issue went into a full-blown investigation complete with Congressional hearing, wherein one of the doctors of the same laboratory became, so to speak, the whistle-blower of the whole charade. Drecker was also accused of holding professional jealousy against the people who strongly (though baselessly) believed in the work of Bannaker. At the same manner, such actions of the laboratory elicited commentary from the whole medical field.

Not to mention, those in politics, in business as well as all people connected with what happened and the general public. How the 'R - 7 Scandal' violated Ethics in Research The whole 'R - 7 scandal' is composed of ethical and moral violations that deserve to be scrutinized both from the researchers' ethical standards and from the perspective of the general public.

Researchers have ethical standards that are built as a two way shield, as a protection for the general public and as flight leverage for the researchers. When researchers conduct certain studies, there are sets of ethical guidelines that should be followed.

Although different field of studies have different sets of guidelines, there are still parallelism in such that every research should follow. Bannaker is probably an honest researcher who did not have the heart for a failed research. Honesty is a major ethical issue with the 'R - 7 Scandal' where the truth about the whole issue may never be entirely given light, or perhaps there will still be doubts as to the real occurrence of the whole fiasco. Not only did Bannaker twisted honestly but it also has something to do with the directors, Mendelssohn and Glass.

Mendelssohn and Glass are the directors of the laboratory and their honesty is a very crucial for the integrity of the researches done under their leadership. They have the bestowed responsibility to make sure that the results are not manipulated in a dishonest way. Such actions have compromised not only themselves, but all the past and current researches done by the staff under their command. This leads to yet another issue of carefulness. Whether the scandal is a product of carelessness or dishonesty,

all that are responsible have still forgotten to take into consideration this ethical virtue.

As a result, irresponsible publication is observed. Responsible publication should be in line with the researchers' openness to the results of their studies, as well as, to gear towards advancement of the field. Bannaker have apparently underestimated Drecker where some reports have said that prior to the deemed termination of Bannaker's RSV, he was already asked to help Drecker in her research. However, Bannaker refused for unconfirmed reason where he thinks of her research as not ambitious enough. That alone is a breach of research ethics in terms of respecting one's colleague in terms of their work.

Responsible mentoring, that should also been practiced by Mendelssohn and Glass, have also failed miserably. They have forgotten to follow procedures like replicating the study just to make sure that the results are both conclusive and reliable. Apparently, key players of the scandal have all been seduced by the fame, honor and the seemingly 'infinite' grants for the laboratory. At the same time, Drecker, whether her intentions are due to integrity or to professional jealousy, her respect for the truth is ambiguous. In addition to this, researches now also possess legal values. Remember that anything anyone does is under laws and regulations.

Consequently, such actions should be appended with legality. The same is true for those who are soliciting for grants or funding from various institutions. How the general public is misled The public who had high hopes of finding the cure for cancer has been disappointed. In UK alone,

there are approximately 289, 000 people who are diagnosed with cancer every year, according to Cancer Research UK. Furthermore, there are 150, 000 cancer deaths each year which actually boil down to an estimated one death every four minutes. Imagine how many people became disheartened by the revelation that the RSV is a hoax.

Social responsibility is a research ethic that should have been treated with respect. Lives are being played at as well as emotions, not only of the people with cancer but the families and friends as well. Thus, nobody have the right to have been as irresponsible as what have happened in the research failure. Clearly, people have expected more ethics from doctors. Generally, people do not condemn any doctor who are ' not producing' any results for their studies. Most are even understanding of such, and in turn are more conscious, respectful and appreciative of those trying to come up with advances especially in the medical field.

The general public has such high respect of people who have dedicated their lives for the advancement of our lives. Without such people, the conveniences that are enjoyed today may never have come into being. Nevertheless, with such trust, the doctors - researchers should always take into consideration the people, patients and families alike, they serve and not their personal gains. The actions of the individuals from the Glass-Mendelssohn laboratory have affected the lives of many around the world.

The gain only belonged to those who have received the fame, grants and all other benefits associated with it, but the suffering is left to those who had tried to hold on for the sake of the ray of hope shed by the results of the

failed study. Indeed, such actions have left more scars of frustrations for the people suffering from cancer as well as their families. Lesson Learned Doctors are also human beings that have rooms for mistakes. The ' R- 7 Scandal' is a result of carelessness, hasty decisions and hidden agendas. The whole mess serves as a wake up call both for researchers, politicians, grant agencies and the general public.

The world of research should be focused on ethical and moral bases. Grant agencies, on the other hand, should be able to create a reliable system of negotiating with research organization on how these organizations can achieve support from them. Politicians should also be able to find more ways for some research laboratories to have funding so that such laboratories would not depend on grants. Thus, less pressure on ' producing' results just to acquire funds for continuing research. The general public should also carry at least an ounce of skepticism to avoid the disappointment brought about by failed researches.

Looking into the bright side, the study only reached global fame in terms of the research scandals. However, it has not sickened the otherwise, already sick patients, or worse killed them. Far more damage and responsibility could have been the result of such. Therefore, the whole ' R - 7 Scandal' should be a reminder of how every single agency and group of individuals should, at least, carry common honesty, careful planning, untainted agenda and uncorrupted social responsibility in making conclusions. Probably, the next time researchers have discovered a cure for cancer or anything resembling such, they would be more responsible and critical.