

Rebecca skloot henrietta lacks

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In Rebecca Skloot's "The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks," the ethical issue of the hospital taking Henrietta Lack's cells seems to be a very major deal and plays an important role throughout the entire book. The book starts off telling you of Mrs. Lacks' life struggles which helps build an emotional appeal to her. Rebecca Skloot painted a vivid picture of Henrietta's life to help give the readers a greater of how immoral the doctors were when they took her cells without her permission. Henrietta was a part of a very poor family.

The book describes how they didn't have very much money so they left their home in Roanoke, VA to go to MD for a better job opportunity for her husband, David Lacks, which was also her 1st cousin. The doctors at John Hopkins typically felt like they had the right to take certain things from their patients who were in the public ward since they were giving away a costly service for free. They felt like they were entitled to some kind of payment so taking cells from unaware patients was a justified trade-off in their eyes.

Henrietta had six children, so it is safe to say that it was hard just living off of her David's salary. The book described that several things were wrong with Henrietta, besides the cervical cancer. Henrietta also had syphilis and gonorrhea. Henrietta wasn't the only person in her household that had medical problems either. Henrietta's daughter, Elsie, was simple and Henrietta also had a couple of very young children. Her medical problems and her children's medical needs were very costly, so as it was common for poor folk, they just ignored them.

Henrietta's family were too poor to afford healthcare and would continue to be too poor enough to afford health care after the doctors began to sell her cells without her permission and well after her death, even up to the point

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that this book was being written. Henrietta's cells were her property and she did not have the right to make a profit of it without her permission. Henrietta's cells were taken against her will, so they were stolen! Her cells greatly impacted medical research. They have been used to find cures for cancer and AIDS, to test human's sensitivity to certain products, gene mapping, and were used to test vaccines for polio.

Henrietta's cells were very instrumental for the production of modern medicine and also very profitable as well. They greatly impacted the lives of people all over the world, but it seems like they almost did nothing for Henrietta and her family. Henrietta's cells were used to help advance medical research, but still Henrietta's family still couldn't afford health care. Her family wasn't informed that her cells had been taken until almost 20 years after her death in the 70s. Henrietta's family just struggled through life like they hadn't changed medical research for ever.

Henrietta's cells were the first "immortal cells", yet it was horribly immoral for the scientists and doctors to steal it from her and then use them to make millions, while her family barely made it by day to day. The HeLa cells, the cells from Henrietta Lacks, were used to grow tons and tons of cells. The cells, though taken wrongly, were used to do very positive things. The people in public wards were used wrongly as guinea pigs. The doctors had no right to steal from them and test on them, just because they couldn't afford health care. They had rights!

They were human beings! They deserved the right to be notified and they deserved the right to be asked for their permission of whether or not they wanted to give small parts of their body to be researched on, no matter how

miniscule. They belonged to the patients and therefore they had the upmost right to be informed and given some type of payment for their contributions. If I own some land and my neighbor decides he wants to grow some crops on it without my permission, because he felt like I wasn't using it and he grows one of the most successful batch of wheat or corn.

Do I not deserve some of the credit or some of the proceeds? Yes, it was his seeds that he used and his labor and also his tools, but my neighbor also used my land and therefore my neighbor is indeed indebted to me and owes me a portion of what he received. This is the exact same for Henrietta Lacks situation. Their tools were used to grow the HeLa cells, but they still took cells from Henrietta and her family was definitely entitled to gaining something.

I completely agree with Rebecca Skloot's position on this problem and she was definitely depicted this story in a very well delivered way and I believe that she did indeed address this ethical issue and even went into it a little more when she mentioned the Tuskegee experiment with syphilis. All in all, Ms. Skloot did a very excellent making this story very understandable and very attractive. She delivered an amazing story on how the health system betrayed one of their patients and took advantage of her and treated public ward patients immorally wrong.