

A History and Theory of Informed Consent

By Ruth R. Faden, Tom L. Beauchamp

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Clearly argued and written in nontechnical language, this book provides a definitive account of informed consent. It begins by presenting the analytic framework for reasoning about informed consent found in moral philosophy and law. The authors then review and interpret the history of informed consent in clinical medicine, research, and the courts. They argue that respect for autonomy has had a central role in the justification and function of informed consent requirements. Then they present a theory of the nature of informed consent that is based on an appreciation of its historical roots. An important contribution to a topic of current legal and ethical debate, this study is accessible to everyone with a serious interest in biomedical ethics, including physicians, philosophers, policy makers, religious ethicists, lawyers, and psychologists. This timely analysis makes a significant contribution to the debate about the rights of patients and subjects.

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Review
"It ought to become a landmark synthesis in the literature of this important idea in bioethics and law."--Journal of the History of Medicine

"A helpful and often authoritative account of informed consent that moves comfortably between empirical and philosophical approaches....An important work within [these] traditional areas."--American Political Science Review

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"An up-to-date compendium of the history of medical, moral, and legal thinking about informed consent, topped off by a provocative and novel interpretation of the conceptual foundations of this important doctrine."--Journal of the American Medical Association

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"Integrates disciplines, issues, perspectives, and time-frames into a thorough, multilayered analysis....The breadth of this work gives it richness and resonance."--Hastings Center Report

"In addition to its substantive contribution and its excellent scholarship, A History and Theory of Informed Consent is remarkable for its organization, clarity, and logical exposition. It adds immensely to our capacity to think through the problems of informed consent in both its ethical and procedural senses."--Contemporary Psychology

"A fair and balanced treatment of a subject that is often learned by example. It clearly sets forth the history of informed consent in legal and medical practices, providing the reader with a firm grounding in the principles that govern informed consent. Understanding these principles and the reasons behind them will not only help you deliver information more accurately to your patients, but it will also guide you in many decisions that you may have to make when discussing options with patients and their families. This is a lesson with the price of the book." --American Academy of Physician Assistants

About the Author
Ruth R. Faden is at Johns Hopkins University School of Public Health. Tom L. Beauchamp is at Georgetown University. Nancy M. P. King is at University of North Carolina School of Medicine.

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