



Joint Centre for Bioethics
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

BIOETHICS SEMINAR

November 23, 2016, 4:10-5:30 pm

155 College St., Room 108 (main floor, to the right of the elevators)

This event will be webcast:

<https://jcb.adobeconnect.com/bioethicsseminars/>

Recognizing Risk and Vulnerability in Research Ethics: Imagining the "What ifs?"

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Abstract: A growing body of empirical work suggests that there tends to be no lasting harm from studies involving 'vulnerable' groups. In this presentation, we will explore the history of protectionism in research and the conceptualization of risk and vulnerability. We will then describe an empirical study we conducted that identified what REBs recognize as vulnerability in research participants, and how they respond to perceived vulnerability. From these data we discovered that REBs are limited in their ability to recognize and mitigate vulnerability because of their mediated and distant view of participants, as well as the current emphasis upon regulation. We argue that participant protection may be better served with greater attention paid to the skills of researchers and research assistants and increased involvement of vulnerable participants in research processes.

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A partnership among the University of Toronto; Centre for Addiction and Mental Health; Holland Bloorview Kids Rehab; The Hospital for Sick Children; Humber River Hospital; Mount Sinai Hospital; Toronto Community Care Access Centre; Trillium Health Partners; and University Health Network (Princess Margaret Hospital, Toronto General Hospital, Toronto Rehabilitation Institute, and Toronto Western Hospital).