



the Ethics Centre of South Australia



Ethics Centre of South Australia

Central Seminar Series 2008

Tuesday 10 June 2008

3.30pm – 4.30pm

Scots Centre (*next to Scots Church*)

Cnr North Terrace and Pulteney Street, Adelaide

Exclusions from research: when is sex-specific research appropriate?

Presented by

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Inclusion in research is a question of both scientific validity of research results and just distribution of the benefits of medical research within a community. Inappropriate exclusions from research can therefore be regulated as a matter of science or a matter of ethics. In this paper we examine the definitions of appropriate/fair inclusion in the Australian and US regulatory systems and discuss the processes for interpreting and implementing these normative standards. In the second part of the paper, we present original results from the first study of sex-specific research in Australia. 113 published papers were examined: 35% were classified as inappropriate sex-specific research where exclusion was not biologically necessary and/or there was no justification for the exclusion of one sex. Our results indicate that a scientific approach to inclusion, rather than one grounded in ethical review, is likely to be more effective in achieving appropriate sex-specific research. In the absence of effective regulation we will continue to see research that discriminates unfairly and perpetuates gender stereotyping.

Wendy is Associate Professor of Medical Ethics and Health Law in the School of Medicine at Flinders University where she provide ethics, law and professionalism teaching across all four years of the graduate entry medical program. Wendy's main research interests are public health ethics and feminist ethics. She has published widely in medical and ethics journals, serves on the editorial boards of Bioethics, Health Expectations and BMC Medical Ethics, and has international editing and reviewing responsibilities.

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