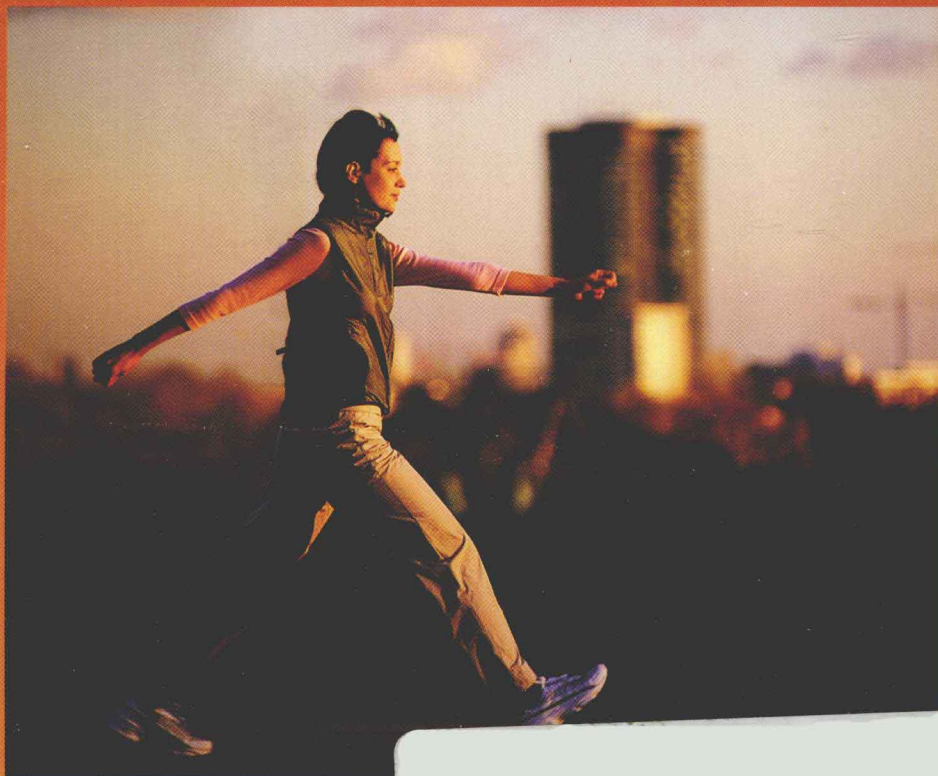


TAKING SIDES



Clashing Views of
Health

SIX

Eileen L. Daniel

Student Web Site



See inside front cover for details

TAKING SIDES



Clashing Views on Controversial
Issues in Health and Society
SIXTH EDITION

Selected, Edited, and with Introductions by

Eileen L. Daniel

State University of New York College at Brockport

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To Ann

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TAKING SIDES



Clashing Views on Controversial

Issues in Health and Society

SIXTH EDITION



Preface

This book contains 42 selections arranged in 21 pro and con pairs. Each pair addresses a controversial issue in health and society, expressed in terms of a question in order to draw the lines of debate more clearly.

Most of the questions that are included here relate to health topics of modern concern, such as managed care, abortion, alternative medicine, and drug use and abuse. The authors of the selections take strong stands on specific issues and provide support for their positions. Although we may not agree with a particular point of view, each author clearly defines his or her stand on the issues.

This book is divided into six parts, each containing related issues. Each part opener provides a brief overview of the issues and offers several related sites on the World Wide Web, including Web addresses. Each issue is preceded by an *introduction*, which sets the stage for the debate, gives historical background on the subject, and provides a context for the controversy. Each issue concludes with a *postscript*, which offers a summary of the debate and some concluding observations and suggests further readings on the subject. The postscript also raises further points, since most of the issues have more than two sides. At the back of the book is a listing of all the *contributors to this volume*, which gives information on the physicians, professors, journalists, theologians, and scientists whose views are debated here.

Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial Issues in Health and Society is a tool to encourage critical thought on important health issues. Readers should not feel confined to the views expressed in the selections. Some readers may see important points on both sides of an issue and may construct for themselves a new and creative approach, which may incorporate the best of both sides or provide an entirely new vantage point for understanding.

Changes to this edition The sixth edition of *Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial Issues in Health and Society* includes some important changes from the fifth edition. Ten completely new issues have been added: *Is the Pharmaceutical Industry Responsible for the High Cost of Prescription Drugs?* (Issue 4); *Is Drug Testing Vital to the Workplace?* (Issue 5); *Should the Government Regulate the Sale, Advertisement, and Distribution of Junk Food?* (Issue 7); *Should Race Play a Role in the Treatment and Study of Disease?* (Issue 8); *Should Addiction to Drugs Be Labeled a Brain Disease?* (Issue 10); *Does Abortion Increase the Risk of Breast Cancer?* (Issue 13); *Does Anabolic Steroid Use Cause Serious Health Problems for Athletes?* (Issue 17); *Does Multiple-Chemical Sensitivity Pose a Serious Health Threat?* (Issue 19); *Is the Atkins Low-Carbohydrate Diet a Valid Weight-Loss Plan?* (Issue 20); and *Should Alternative Medicine Be Combined With Conventional Medicine?* (Issue 21). For other issues, I kept the issue question from the fifth edition but replaced one or both of the selections in order to make the issue more current or more clearly

focused. As a result, there are a total of 10 new issues and 27 new articles. In addition, the issue introductions and postscripts have been revised and updated.

A word to the instructor An *Instructor's Manual With Test Questions* (both multiple-choice and essay) is available through the publisher for instructors using *Taking Sides* in the classroom. Also available is a general guidebook, *Using Taking Sides in the Classroom*, which discusses teaching techniques and methods for integrating the pro-con approach of *Taking Sides* into any classroom setting. An online version of *Using Taking Sides in the Classroom* and a correspondence service for *Taking Sides* adopters can be found at <http://www.dushkin.com/usingsides/>.

Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial Issues in Health and Society is only one title in the *Taking Sides* series. If you are interested in seeing the table of contents for any of the other titles, please visit the *Taking Sides* Web site at <http://www.dushkin.com/takingsides/>.

Acknowledgments Special thanks go to John, Diana, and Jordan. Also thanks to my colleagues at the State University of New York College at Brockport for all of their helpful contributions. I was also assisted in preparing this edition by the valuable suggestions from the adopters who filled out comment cards and questionnaires. Many of their recommendations were incorporated into this edition. Finally, I appreciate the assistance of the staff at McGraw-Hill/Dushkin and thank them for all of their help.

Eileen L. Daniel
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Introduction

Dimensions and Approaches to the Study of Health and Society

Eileen L. Daniel

What Is Health?

Traditionally, being healthy meant being absent of illness. If someone did not have a disease, then he or she was considered healthy. The overall health of a nation or specific population was determined by numbers measuring illness, disease, and death rates. Today this rather negative view of assessing individual health and health in general is changing. A healthy person is one who is not only free from disease but also fully well.

Being well, or wellness, involves the interrelationship of many dimensions of health: physical, emotional, social, mental, and spiritual. This multifaceted view of health reflects a holistic approach, which includes individuals taking responsibility for their own well-being.

Our health and longevity are affected by the many choices we make every day. Medical reports tell us that if we abstain from smoking, drugs, excessive alcohol consumption, fat, and cholesterol, and if we get regular exercise, our rate of disease and disability will significantly decrease. These reports, although not totally conclusive, have encouraged many people to make positive lifestyle changes. Millions of people have quit smoking, alcohol consumption is down, and more and more individuals are exercising regularly and eating low-fat diets. These changes are encouraging, but the many people who have been unable or unwilling to make them are left feeling worried and/or guilty over continuing their negative health behaviors.

Additionally, experts disagree about the exact nature of positive health behaviors, and this causes confusion. For example, some scientists maintain that overweight Americans should make efforts to lose weight, even if it takes many tries. Many Americans have tried unsuccessfully to lose weight by eating a low-fat diet. However, experts debate on whether a low-fat, high-carbohydrate diet or a low-carbohydrate diet, which includes ample protein and fat, is best. Other debatable issues include whether or not people should utilize only conventional medicines or if they should also seek out alternative therapies.

Health status is also affected by society and government. Societal pressures have helped pass smoking restrictions in public places, mandatory safety belt legislation, and laws permitting condom distribution in public schools.

The government plays a role in the health of individuals as well, although it has failed to provide minimal health care for many low-income Americans.

Unfortunately, there are no absolute answers to many questions regarding health and wellness issues. Moral questions, controversial concerns, and individual perceptions of health matters all can create opposing views. As you evaluate the issues in this book, you should keep an open mind toward both sides. You might not change your mind regarding the morality of abortion or the limitation of health care for the elderly or mentally handicapped, but you will still be able to learn from the opposing viewpoint.

The Health Care Industry

The issues in this book are divided into six parts. The first part deals with the health care industry. Issue 1 contains a debate on whether or not managed health care offers consumers an improvement over traditional care. In the United States approximately 40 million Americans have no health insurance. Furthermore, there has been a resurgence in diseases such as tuberculosis and antibiotic-resistant strains of bacterial infections, which threaten thousands of Americans and strain the current system. Those enrolled in government programs such as Medicaid often find few, if any, physicians who will accept them as patients because reimbursements are low and the paperwork is cumbersome. On the other hand, Americans continue to live longer and longer, and for most of us, the health care available is among the best in the world.

Issue 2 debates the wisdom of using expensive life-prolonging treatments on elderly patients. While many Americans agree that there are some situations in which health care should be rationed, many also find it difficult to decide exactly how it should be rationed and how this decision should be made.

Issue 3 introduces the question of how people obtain health insurance. The majority of the insured in this country receive their coverage through a group plan offered by their employer. They—and/or their employer—pay lower premiums than the self-employed, the unemployed, or those employed by a business that does not provide an insurance plan. Many of those without employment-based health insurance cannot afford adequate insurance, or, frequently, any insurance at all. Also, those who have employment-based health insurance often experience difficulty maintaining their coverage when they move from one employer to another. Should adequate health insurance be so closely tied to where and how a person is employed?

Issue 4 addresses the high cost of prescription drugs. Many lifesaving medications have been developed in recent years, but they come at a high price. Should consumers pay for the research and development of drugs?

Health and Society

Part 2 introduces current issues related to health from a societal perspective. Issue 5 discusses drug testing in the workplace. Many companies require their employees to undergo drug testing prior to employment. Some firms also en-

gage in random testing for current workers. There is concern that this infringement of privacy may not provide benefits to employers. Does drug testing result in increased productivity and decreased costs? Do the benefits outweigh the potential invasion of privacy?

Issue 6 deals with whether or not physicians should intervene to hasten death for hopelessly ill persons. Many Americans agree that we cannot and should not prolong the lives of terminally ill patients, although others believe that physicians should not hasten the process of dying but rather should offer these individuals relief from pain and quality of life management strategies.

The topic of whether the government should regulate the sale, advertisement, and distribution of junk food is explored in Issue 7. This debate parallels discussions concerning governmental regulations of tobacco companies. The sale, distribution, and advertisement of tobacco is controlled by national, state, and local governments in an effort to generate tax revenues and to reduce smoking. Should nonnutritious foods that encourage obesity and other health problems be similarly treated?

The issue of combining health care, medical care, and race is addressed in Issue 8. As scientists develop the ability to genetically “map” the human body, the role of race has surfaced. Is race important when considering how to treat disease? Is it clear that more research is needed in determining how to treat disease? It is clear that more research is needed in determining how much of a role, if any, race should play in the study and care of disease. Could the inclusion of race as a factor in deciding how best to treat disease lead to abuse?

Issue 9 asks, Should human cloning ever be permitted? Cloning technology offers the *potential* to asexually produce a human child. While there are pros and cons to the ability to clone cells, ethical and moral questions also arise—especially when the issue involves the creation of a new human life.

Mind/Body Relationship

Part 3 discusses three important issues related to the relationship between mind and body. Issue 10 examines the relationship between drug addiction and brain disease. Millions of Americans use and abuse drugs that alter their minds and affect their bodies. Use of these substances can lead to physical and psychological addiction and the related problems of family dysfunction, reduced worker productivity, and crime. Are addictions within the control of those who abuse drugs? Issue 11 deals with stress and how it relates to disease. Over the past 10 years, both laypeople and the medical profession have placed an emphasis on the prevention of illness as a way to improve health. Not smoking, for instance, certainly reduces the risk of developing lung cancer. Unfortunately, the current U.S. health care system places an emphasis on treatment rather than on prevention, even though prevention is less expensive, less painful, and more humane. Stress management programs have arisen to prevent stress-related illness, which many believe is responsible for the majority of doctor visits. Does stress cause disease, and will managing stress actually prevent disease?

Issue 12 discusses the role of spirituality in the prevention of illness. Many studies have found that religion and spirituality play a role in recovery from sickness. Should health providers encourage their patients to seek spirituality?

Sexuality and Gender Issues

The first issue in this section contains a debate on whether or not abortion increases the risk of breast cancer. The abortion issue continues to cause major controversy. More restrictions have been placed on the right to abortion as a result of the political power wielded by the pro-life faction. Pro-choice followers, however, argue that making abortion illegal again will force many women to obtain dangerous “back-alley” abortions. One controversial issue relating to abortion is its relationship to breast cancer. Pro-life groups maintain that there is a connection and urge women to avoid abortion. Pro-choice factions disagree and state that data do not show any linkage between breast cancer and abortion.

The second issue in this section discusses whether or not our health care system favors men at the expense of women. Although they live longer than men, many women assert that they have been excluded from drug tests and other medical research and that they receive inferior care when they see doctors. Opponents of this view maintain that women see their doctors more frequently than men, are hospitalized more often, and continue to outlive men by several years.

Public Health Issues

The first controversy in this section is about the epidemic of homicide and the potential benefits of more stringent gun control. Doctors and public health officials state that homicides involving guns are increasing, which is driving health care costs up and diminishing quality of life. They maintain that gun control would help reduce the shooting and deaths. Opponents of gun control argue that under such a policy only criminals—not law-abiding citizens—would have access to guns. They also contend that doctors should leave the gun control issue to criminologists.

The threat of bioterrorism has resurrected the risk of smallpox, which was thought to be eradicated in the late 1970s. Issue 16 focuses on whether or not all parents should be forced to have their children immunized against smallpox.

At the turn of the twentieth century, millions of American children developed childhood diseases such as tetanus, polio, measles, and pertussis (whooping cough). Many of these children died or became permanently disabled because of these illnesses. Today vaccines can prevent all of these conditions; however, not all children receive their recommended immunizations. Some do not get vaccinated until the schools require them, and others are allowed exemptions. More and more, parents are requesting exemptions for some or all vaccinations based on fears over their safety and their effectiveness. The pertussis vaccination seems to generate the biggest fears. Reports of serious injury to children following the pertussis vaccination (usually given in a combination of diphtheria, pertussis, and tetanus, or DPT) have convinced many parents to

forgo immunization. As a result, the incidence rates of measles and pertussis have been climbing after decades of decline. Is it safer to be vaccinated than to risk getting pertussis?

The final two issues in this part concern drug use and abuse in the United States. Millions of Americans use drugs that alter their minds and affect their bodies. Issue 17 asks, Does anabolic steroid use cause serious health problems for athletes? Some contend that assertions about health risks are greatly exaggerated. Short-term use is said to be harmless, and many athletes consider the benefits of steroid use to outweigh any possible side effects. However, others counter that steroid use can be linked to illness and death.

Because of drug-related crime, many experts have argued for the legalization of drugs, particularly marijuana. Issue 18 considers the argument that if currently illegal drugs were legalized, the enormous profits from illegal drug sales would no longer exist, which would reduce criminal behavior in this area and allow law enforcement officials to focus on other crime areas. The American drug crisis is often related to changes in or a breakdown of traditional values. The collapse of strong family and religious influences may affect drug usage, especially among young people. It has been argued, however, that some people, regardless of societal or familial influences, will use drugs based on need. For example, some people have testified that cancer patients can benefit from marijuana because it reduces the severity of the effects of chemotherapy. Although there is a movement to legalize this drug for its medicinal purposes, many experts want marijuana to remain illegal.

Consumer Health

Part 6 introduces questions about particular issues related to personal choices about health care: Issue 19 contains a debate concerning whether or not multiple-chemical sensitivity (MCS) is a legitimate condition or a psychosomatic illness. MCS begins with exposure to a certain environmental substance that eventually causes the sufferer to develop severe reactions to other ordinary chemicals. Some assert that test have failed to provide any evidence of this condition. However, those who suffer from MCS argue that this condition prevents them from participating in many daily activities.

As Americans grow increasingly overweight, many debate about what is the most effective means of weight control. Some researchers believe that a Mediterranean-style diet, which includes ample amounts of olive oil along with a variety of fruits and vegetables, is the most effective way to maintain a healthy weight. Others argue that a low-fat or low-carbohydrate diet is best. Issue 20 explores the relationship between the Atkins diet, which includes low-carbohydrate foods, and weight loss.

Issue 21 deals with alternative medicines and conventional medicines. Many patients are choosing to combine the two, believing that they are uniting the best of both worlds. Are there risks associated with doing so? Some are concerned about potential side effects that will harm the patient when combining alternative medicines with conventional medicines. While some will testify to

the benefits they have personally gained from alternative medicines, others will point out the lack of rigorous testing of alternative drugs. Are patients being done a disservice if their physicians do not make them aware of alternative medicines that may help them? Or will they find that alternative medicines that may help them? Or will they find that alternative medicines undermine the effectiveness of conventional medicines?

Will the 21 debates presented in this book ever be resolved? Some issues may resolve themselves because of the availability of resources. For instance, funding for health care for the elderly may become restricted in the United States, as it is in the United Kingdom, simply because there are increasingly limited resources to go around. As health costs continue to rise, an overhaul of the health care system to provide managed care for all while keeping costs down seems inevitable. Other controversies may require the test of time for resolution. Several more years may be required before it can be determined if certain diseases are caused by stress. The debates over the effectiveness of low-fat diets and the long-term benefits of drug testing may also take years to be fully resolved.

Other controversies may never resolve themselves. There may never be a consensus over the abortion issue, gun control, rationing health care or physician-assisted suicide. This book will introduce you to many ongoing controversies on a variety of sensitive and complex health-related topics. In order to have a good grasp of one's own viewpoint, it is necessary to be familiar with and understand the points made by the opposition.



On the Internet . . .



The National Committee for Quality Assurance

The National Committee for Quality Assurance's Web page features an HMO accreditation status list that is updated monthly. It also provides accreditation summary reports on a number of HMO plans and other consumer information on managed care plans.

<http://www.ncqa.org>

Huffington Center on Aging

The Huffington Center on Aging, Baylor College of Medicine's home page, offers links to related sites on aging and Alzheimer's disease.

<http://www.hcoa.org>

United States Census Bureau Health Insurance Data

On this site are Census Bureau data on health insurance coverage status and type of coverage by age, sex, gender, race, Hispanic origin, state, and other characteristics.

<http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/hlthins.html>

Prescription Drugs: The Issue

This site contains a profile of prescription drugs, including a look at the interest groups behind the issue and the campaign contributions that are made based on records.

<http://www.opensecrets.org/news/drug/>



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Issue 1. Will Managed Care Improve Health Care in the United States? 2

YES: David Jacobsen, from "Cost-Conscious Care," *Reason* (June 1996) 4

NO: Ronald J. Glasser, from "The Doctor Is Not In: On the Managed Failure of Managed Health Care," *Harper's Magazine* (March 1998) 10

Surgeon David Jacobsen states that health maintenance organizations (HMOs) offer quality care and that high-quality medical care at an affordable price is not only possible under managed care, it is a reality. Pediatrician and author Ronald J. Glasser argues that managed care companies care more for profits than for people.

Issue 2. Should Health Care for the Elderly Be Rationed? 20

YES: Alan Williams, from "The Rationing Debate: Rationing Health Care by Age: The Case For," *British Medical Journal* (March 15, 1997) 22

NO: Patricia Lanoie Blanchette, from "Age-Based Rationing of Healthcare," *Generations* (Winter 1996-1997) 27

Professor Alan Williams contends that rationing health care in old age has some merit. He asserts that the treatment of young people should be a priority. Patricia Lanoie Blanchette, a physician and a professor of medicine and public health, argues that health care should not be rationed by age and that age bias should be recognized and confronted.

Issue 3. Does Employer-Based Health Insurance Provide Adequate Coverage for Most Americans? 36

YES: William S. Custer, Charles N. Kahn III, and Thomas F. Wildsmith IV, from "Why We Should Keep the Employment-Based Health Insurance System," *Health Affairs* (November/December 1999) 38

NO: Uwe E. Reinhardt, from "Employer-Based Health Insurance: A Balance Sheet," *Health Affairs* (November/December 1999) 43

Insurance and policy analysts William S. Custer, Charles N. Kahn III, and Thomas F. Wildsmith IV assert that the employment-based healthcare system in the United States offers a solid, proven foundation on which to base any reform, and that attempts to break the link between employment and health insurance coverage may greatly increase the number of uninsured Americans. Economist Uwe E. Reinhardt counters that, overall, the benefits of an employer-based health insurance system are outweighed by the problems, and that a new system could ultimately replace the current system.

Issue 4. Is the Pharmaceutical Industry Responsible for the High Cost of Prescription Drugs? 48

YES: Christopher F. Koller, from "Prescription for Trouble: Why Drug Prices Keep Exploding," *Commonweal* (June 15, 2001) 50

NO: Ronald Bailey, from "Goddamn the Pusher Man," *Reason* (April 2001) 57

Christopher F. Koller, CEO of Neighborhood Health Plan of Rhode Island, a health plan serving Medicaid enrollees based in Providence, asserts that the pharmaceutical industry has achieved its rapid growth by political protection and by exploiting the vulnerabilities of patients. Ronald Bailey, science correspondent for *Reason* magazine, states that spending on prescriptions is rising rapidly because Americans are buying more drugs. Bailey maintains that the drug companies have actually enriched the quality of our lives.

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Issue 5. Is Drug Testing Vital to the Workplace? 70

YES: William F. Current, from "Cut Costs and Increase Safety With Pre-Employment Drug Testing," *Occupational Hazards* (July 2002) 72

NO: Jacob Sullum, from "Urine—Or You're Out," *Reason* (November 2002) 76

William F. Current, president of WFC & Associates, a national consulting firm specializing in drug-free workplace policies, states that pre-employment drug testing is accepted by employees, hassle free, and beneficial to employers. Jacob Sullum, senior editor of *Reason* magazine, argues that employment-based drug testing is insulting to employees and mostly irrelevant to future job performance.

Issue 6. Should Doctors Ever Help Terminally Ill Patients to Commit Suicide? 90

YES: Richard T. Hull, from "The Case For Physician-Assisted Suicide," *Free Inquiry* (Spring 2003) 92

NO: Margaret Somerville, from "The Case Against Physician-Assisted Suicide," *Free Inquiry* (Spring 2003) 96

Richard T. Hull, professor emeritus of philosophy at the State University of New York at Buffalo, asserts that physician-assisted suicide is the only resource terminally ill patients have with which to communicate that their end-of-life care is inadequate. Margaret Somerville, Gale Professor of Law and professor in the faculty of medicine at the McGill University Centre for Medicine, Ethics, and Law in Montreal, Canada, argues that basic reasons to oppose euthanasia include the sanctity of human life and the harms and risks to individuals and to society. Somerville contends that these reasons outweigh any possible benefits.

Issue 7. Should the Government Regulate the Sale, Advertisement, and Distribution of Junk Food? 102

YES: Marion Nestle and Michael F. Jacobson, from "Halting the Obesity Epidemic: A Public Health Policy Approach," *Public Health Reports* (January/February 2000) 104

NO: Michelle Cottle, from "Heavy Duty," *The New Republic* (May 13, 2002) 120

Professor of nutrition Marion Nestle and Michael F. Jacobson, director of the Center for Science in the Public Interest, state that a public health approach is needed to encourage Americans to eat a healthy diet. Writer Michelle Cottle argues that nonnutritious food should not be regulated any more than other unhealthy products. Cottle maintains that our relationships to food are too complex for the government to oversee.

Issue 8. Should Race Play a Role in the Treatment and Study of Disease? 128

YES: Esteban González Burchard et al., from "The Importance of Race and Ethnic Background in Biomedical Research and Clinical Practice," *The New England Journal of Medicine* (March 20, 2003) 130

NO: Richard S. Cooper, Jay S. Kaufman, and Ryk Ward, from "Race and Genomics," *The New England Journal of Medicine* (March 20, 2003) 139

Physician Esteban González Burchard and his colleagues contend that race should play a role in the treatment and study of disease since there is evidence that the risk of common diseases is determined by race-related genes. Medical researchers Richard S. Cooper, Jay S. Kaufman, and Ryk Ward argue that the potential for abuse is a reason to disregard race in genetic and medical studies. They also maintain that there is little evidence that the risk of most diseases is linked to race-related genes.

Issue 9. Should Human Cloning Ever Be Permitted? 148

YES: John A. Robertson, from "Human Cloning and the Challenge of Regulation," *The New England Journal of Medicine* (July 9, 1998) 150

NO: George J. Annas, from "Why We Should Ban Human Cloning," *The New England Journal of Medicine* (July 9, 1998) 156

Attorney John A. Robertson contends there are many benefits to cloning and that a ban on privately funded cloning research is unjustified. Attorney and medical ethicist George J. Annas argues that cloning devalues people by depriving them of their uniqueness.

PART 3 MIND/BODY RELATIONSHIP 165

Issue 10. Should Addiction to Drugs Be Labeled a Brain Disease? 166

YES: Alan I. Leshner, from "Addiction Is a Brain Disease," *Issues in Science and Technology* (Spring 2001) 168