

Dialogue 7

# Demographics and Ethics: Classifying Race and Ethnicity in Research

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*Vanderbilt University*

Noon, Friday, July 15, 2011  
RMSB 3rd-Floor Auditorium

—————→ Please bring a lunch ←————  
(No RSVPs required)

Research policies from the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and Office for Human Research Protection (OHRP) are intended both to protect vulnerable populations and address racial and ethnic disparities in health. IRBs require investigators to report the ethnic and racial classifications of study participants, even as demographic shifts, advances in population genetics and the growth of international research pose complex challenges to the use of federal definitions of race and ethnicity. The difficulty of defining groups and classifying individual participants requires that researchers consider why ethnicity and race may be ethically and clinically important variables, as well as how to use federal criteria.

Dr. Heitman is Associate Professor and Director of Clinical and Research Ethics in the Center for Biomedical Ethics and Society at Vanderbilt University. Her research focuses on graduate and post-graduate education in the responsible conduct of research and on trainees' cultural awareness and professional socialization. She has written extensively about cultural and religious aspects of medicine, biomedical science and public health. As a director of the Fogarty International Center research ethics education program CREE-Costa Rica with the Hospital Nacional de Niños in San José, Costa Rica, Dr. Heitman is involved in multiple aspects of ethics and policy in international research.

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