



Dissecting History

Exploring the Use of Human Bodies in Medicine through Time

University of Leeds
School of Fine Art, History of Art and Cultural Studies

Each of us has been affected by the many tireless efforts of medical research. We read about the accomplishments of scientists and doctors, and we celebrate the efforts of our modern doctors and researchers. Yet, the darker history of research remains a backdrop of thought. This exhibit hopes to shed some light on one of medical history's turbulent byproducts: consent of human bodies.

Using items from the Wellcome Collection, this exhibition travels through time to explore ways in which human bodies have been used to benefit and further medical research, and in turn the ethical issues that arise from using these bodies. We explore consent, ethics, and bodily autonomy, and try to untangle the difficult question; was it worth it?

Beginning with a consideration of the crimes that medical schools committed, to stories of research using HeLa cells unethically taken and ending upon a speculation of the future of medical research. We explore ideas of consent and progress, and ask both if the moral sacrifice was worth it, and are we acknowledging these stories enough.