

Consent and Non-Exploitation in Clinical Trials on Heroin Assisted Treatment: The Case of SALOME

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ABSTRACT

Bioethicists have extensively debated whether long-term opioid dependence undermines the ability of individuals to voluntarily consent to clinical research that delivers heroin assisted treatment. In this article, we suggest that this debate be reframed in terms of ethical concerns that arise when needed treatment is accessible only through participation in clinical trials. We discuss this issue through the Study to Assess Longer-term Opioid Medication Effectiveness, which presents an opportunity to reflect on the dilemma faced by researchers when federal regulatory and drug policies challenge provision of post-trial access to medications.