Finally, with or without IRB consideration, citizens have legal recourse for injuries they sustain because of lack of funds to underwrite the research. Professional organizations are becoming more involved in defining ethical standards, and tough regulations may be reinstituted if needed. Social researchers have not been cut loose from the many remaining sources of social control.

In any event, one of the great benefits of the emerging HHS regulations over the past fifteen years has been a gradual restoration of confidence in socially oriented research. If one of the goals of the regulations is to promote a research climate that has improved the moral and scientific climate of research using human subjects..."Shrewd enough," Mr. Veatch? Really, you go too far.

Lauren H. Seiler
Dept. of Sociology
Queens College, CUNY

Robert Veatch replies:

Dr. Seiler seems to be confused by my analysis of the new regulations. He accuses me of failing to consider the wide range of governmental, professional, and institutional forces available to protect subjects of social science research. That was my point when I argued that the withdrawal of DHHS from the regulation of certain classes of research "will mean a new sense of responsibility for other groups, individuals, and government bodies." Furthermore, I argue that researchers will have to rely, as they have in the past, on their own moral integrity. I am puzzled why Dr. Seiler sees any of this as "inventing facts" or being insulting to researchers. He shows not a single instance of either.

If we have any disagreement at all, it would be over whether rational people who are potential subjects for research would consent to participate in such research unless they had some assurance that their rights and welfare were going to be protected. I maintain that they would not and that the local IRB review of research, including social science research, has in the past provided some degree of such assurance. I have never suggested that researchers are shrewd enough to conduct research [such as the Tuskegee syphilis and Willowbrook hepatitis studies], but without using HHS funds, their experiments will escape the body of regulation that has improved the moral and scientific climate of research using human subjects...

On "Moral clarity"

The recent symposium on "Moral Clarity" has raised some interesting questions about the nature of moral judgment and moral decision making. The symposium was designed to bring together philosophers, sociologists, and legal scholars to discuss the nature of moral judgment and the role of legal principles in moral decision making. The symposium was held in conjunction with the Annual Meeting of the American Philosophical Association, Eastern Division, and was sponsored by the Department of Philosophy, University of Michigan, and the Department of Philosophy, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

The symposium was divided into two main parts. The first part was devoted to the nature of moral judgment, and the second part was devoted to the role of legal principles in moral decision making.

In the first part of the symposium, the papers of the following authors were presented:

- Laurence H. Seiler, "Moral Clarity and the Common Law"
- Robert Veatch, "Moral Clarity and the Common Law"
- Richard McCormick, "Moral Clarity and the Common Law"
- Stephen Toulmin, "Moral Clarity and the Common Law"

In the second part of the symposium, the papers of the following authors were presented:

- James Carmody, "Moral Clarity and the Common Law"
- William K. Frankena, "Moral Clarity and the Common Law"

The symposium was a success in that it was well attended and received favorable reviews. The papers were well received, and the discussions were lively and informative. The symposium was a valuable contribution to the ongoing debate about the nature of moral judgment and the role of legal principles in moral decision making.