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Working group on research ethics in the humanities and social sciences (HYMY II)

Chair of the HYMY II working group, Archivist Arja Kuula
Finnish Social Science Data Archive, University of Tampere,
National Advisory Board on Research Ethics

THE GOOD BAD ETHICS – Is ethics review needed in humanities and social science research? 10.3.2008 Tieteiden talo (House of Science and Letters)



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Opening address

- What does ethics review mean?
- HYMY II
 - Background and need for the working group
 - Composition
 - Mandate of the working group
 - Past activity and future plans of the working group



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Ethics review

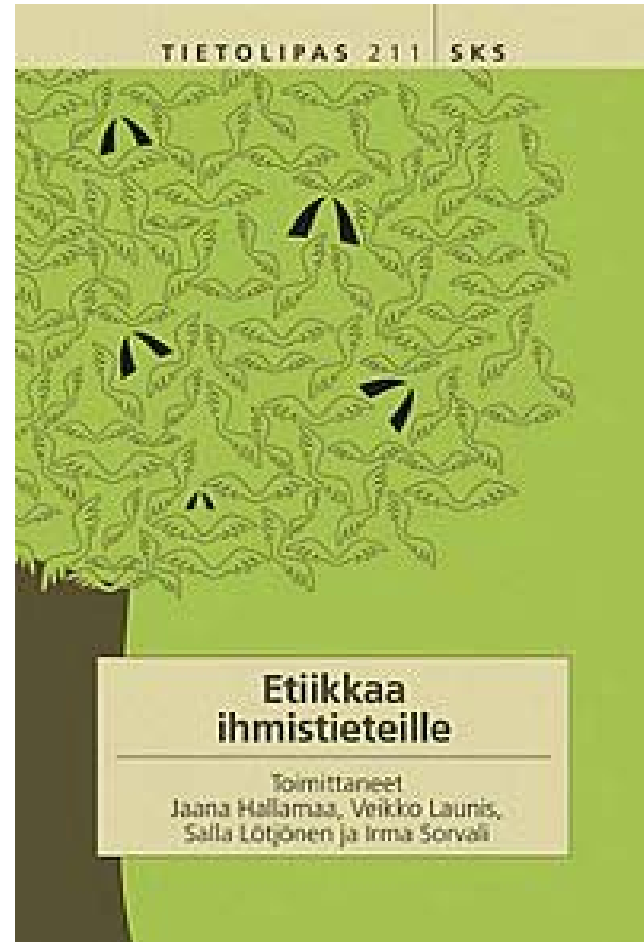
- Ethical norms of science
 - Norms for seeking scientific truth and judging the reliability of research
 - Norms for protecting human dignity
 - Norms connected to relationships between researchers
- Used in medicine already since the end of the 1960s
- Realised by an impartial and independent body
- Research plan and supplementary material are subjected to review
 - Ethical acceptability of the research
 - Status and rights of research subjects (voluntariness, approval, informing)
 - Potential risks and disadvantages compared to advantages



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HYMY I (2002 – 2006)

- Professor Jaana Hallamaa, Adjunct Professor Veikko Launis, Professor Irma Sorvali, Secretary Salla Lötjönen
- The need for and contents of the instructions for ethics review in humanities and social science research
- 31 interviews, 23 articles





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HYMY II

1.11.2007 – 31.12.2008

- Need for ethics review
 - International publication, foreign sponsor, or foreign research partner requires the review
 - Competence and capacity of hospital district ethics committees are not adequate
 - Researcher him/herself needs the support gained through the review for conducting his/her study
 - *”But do we even know what kind of harm participating in a research process might bring to the individual or his/her family?”* Sakari Karjalainen 2006 → Research subjects need protection



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HYMY II composition

Chair: Arja Kuula,
Finnish Social Science Data Archive

Vice Chair:
Outi Konttinen, National Advisory
Board on Health Care
Ethics (ETENE)/Sub-Committee on
Medical Research Ethics

Secretary: Salla Lötjönen,
National Advisory Board on
Research Ethics

Members:

Katie Eriksson, ÅAU
Kaijus Ervasti, NRILP
Heta Gylling, UH
Kari Hämäläinen, GIER
Christer Kuvaja, SLS
Klaus Mäkelä
Vuokko Niiranen, UKu
Ritva Nupponen, UKK Institute
Ulla-Maija Peltonen, FLS
Matti Savolainen, UTa



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Mandate

1. To ascertain the need for ethics review
2. To put forward the necessary proposals concerning documents required for ethics review (frame of reference and contentual guidelines)
3. To put forward the necessary proposals concerning implementation of ethics review (timetable, organisation, funding, and anticipated effects on the academic community)



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Activity

- Regular meetings
- Seminars
 - Necessity of ethics review: 10.3.2008, Tieteiden talo (House of Science and Letters), Helsinki
 - Organisational frame of reference for ethics review: 9.6.2008, Tieteiden talo (House of Science and Letters), Helsinki
 - Need for contentual guidelines, contents and authors: autumn 2008
 - Release of the final report: December 2008 or January 2009
- Transparency of work: http://www.tenk.fi/hymy/hymy_eng/ (letter of appointment, mandate, seminar programmes and presentations, minutes of meetings)



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Challenges

- Meeting the needs of ethics review
- Avoiding excessive bureaucracy
- Protecting the freedom of science
- Engaging the academic community!