



“Ethical Implications of Next-Generation Genomic Research: The Problem of Incidental Findings”

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Georgetown University Law Center
E.B. Williams Law Library, Room 358
600 New Jersey Ave., NW Washington, DC 20001

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Benjamin Berkman, J.D., M.P.H is a faculty member in the NIH Department of Bioethics, and is the Deputy Director of the Bioethics Core at the National Human Genome Research Institute. He was formerly the Deputy Director of the O’Neill Institute for National and Global Health Law at Georgetown Law (2007-2009), where he continues to serve as an Adjunct Professor. Mr. Berkman received a Bachelors Degree in the History of Science and Medicine at Harvard University (1999). He subsequently earned a Juris Doctor and a Masters in Public Health from the University of Michigan (2005).

As a faculty member in the Department of Bioethics, Mr. Berkman’s research interests span a wide range of topics. His current work focuses on the legal and ethical issues associated with genomic research, genetic information privacy, public health emergency preparedness, and research involving vulnerable populations.

The past few years have been marked by a transition into a new phase of research that focuses on the genome as a whole. The increasing availability of affordable next generation sequencing makes it easier for laboratories to engage in genomic research. The ethical, legal and social concerns previously associated with targeted genetic research are amplified by the magnitude and types of information generated by large-scale genomic sequencing. Concerns that had been rare are becoming more prevalent and more complex, and institutional review boards (IRBs) are being called upon to review the ethics of research involving the use of these emergent, cutting edge technologies in research with human subjects prior to the development of ethical consensus and regulatory guidance about the use of these technologies. This talk will discuss the ethical issues raised by next-generation genomic research, focusing on the complicated questions related to the management of incidental or secondary findings that have potential health or reproductive importance and are discovered in the course of conducting research but are beyond the aims of the study.