

Professor Alastair Campbell

Ordained Minister Church of Scotland
Professor of Ethics in Medicine Univ. Bristol
Foundation Editor 'Journal of Medical Ethics' 75-80.

Herewith some quotes from Professor Campbell's book, '*Medical Ethics 1998*', Oxford University, by Alastair Campbell, et al.

'Clearly a committee composed entirely of researchers could not be regarded as sufficiently distant from the research community, or sufficiently close to the community at large, to make impartial judgments about such matters as degrees of risk and discomfort, or the adequacy of information and consent procedures. On the other hand, a committee lacking the necessary scientific expertise could never make accurate assessments of either the scientific validity and usefulness of the project or the possible risks entailed. It is therefore essential to have a balanced membership, representing a wide range of perspectives on research, including the various social or cultural milieux of the research participants. Particular attention must be paid to minority and other vulnerable groups; ... It is also important to have other forms of expertise on the committee in addition to the relevant scientific knowledge -notably expertise in law and in religious or philosophical ethics.' (pp.175)

'Token 'lay' membership is never sufficient to ensure the proper independence of the committee from the scientific community it is assessing, since the technical nature of much of the material discussed can easily put the non-scientific members at a psychological disadvantage and may lead to a dominance of decision-making by those with expertise in the research area (Campbell, 1987).....'

'An ethical committee functioning without reference to any other body is always in danger of idiosyncrasy in its judgments, or liable to come under the influence of partisan groups of one kind or another. The accountability of the committee should first be ensured by a declaration that its decisions are taken in accordance with an internationally recognised set of guidelines.' (*Research Ethics*, Chapter 12)

'Since medicine is primarily concerned with the well-being of individuals and of the community as a whole, no research should override the human values medicine seeks to serve.' (*Research Ethics*, Chapter 12)

(It would be interesting to know Professor Campbell's opinion of the CMO's group, of which he is a member. Does it conform to his ideals?)

CORE RESEARCH PAPER