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Worksheet for lab #4 (part 2). HeLa cells and Research Ethics. Debate

We will have a one-hour debate in groups of four on using the HeLa cell line. In this debate, we will summarize the main arguments representing The Lacks family and Johns Hopkins Hospital about obtaining, exploring, and using HeLa cells, as well as other ethical issues related to HeLa cells story.

Each group member will have a role: (1) a member of the Lacks family; (2) a doctor from Johns Hopkins Hospital; (3) a scientist working on cells; and (4) a recorder. The recorder will summarize ideas and write them down. The roles will be randomly assigned in the beginning of the lab. You do not need to be prepared; you will be able to find all the information you need for this debate online.

In your group please discuss the following questions and fill in table 1 on page 2:

Q1. Consider the cell sample which was taken from Henrietta Lacks. Was it ethical or unethical? What are the points of view of the Lacks family members, doctors at Johns Hopkins Hospital, scientists? (~15 min)

Q2. Think about the profits from growing and using of HeLa cells for different purposes. Should the Lacks family, doctors, business companies, or scientists benefit from it? (~10 min)

Q3. Should the Lacks family members be informed about using HeLa cells? If yes, then when was the right moment? (~10 min)

Q4. Are there any other arguments you mentioned in your discussion? (~5 min)

Here are the links you may find helpful:

<https://bigpictureeducation.com/quick-guide-hela-cells>

<http://www.biosurplus.com/blog/the-hela-cell-line-sequencing-ethics-and-the-nih-agreement/>

<http://archive.magazine.jhu.edu/2010/06/immortal-cells-enduring-issues/>

<https://www.accessscience.com/content/importance-of-hela-cells/BR0826141>

<http://henrietalacksfoundation.org/>

Table 1. Main arguments about the use of HeLa cells. Different perspectives.

Questions for discussion	The Lacks Family	Johns Hopkins Hospital	Scientists
Q1			
Q2			
Q3			

Q4			
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Please discuss in your group two additional questions:

Q4. Do you think this debate was useful for developing your own opinion on issues with using HeLa cells? Why or why not? (~3 min)

Q5. What one change in this debate would you recommend to improve its educational value? (~2 min)