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RESEARCH AND PSYCHIATRIC DISEASE

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Research with psychiatric patients raises frequently discussed, ethical questions, one of which is: Can psychiatric patients give consent to participation in research at all? To answer this and similar questions adequately, it is - according to our thesis - necessary to analyze first, which theoretical assumptions are made in established practice.

To solve the question after the possibility of consent, compatible understandings of 'disease', 'illness' and 'autonomy' are crucial, but there is no consensual use of these terms in philosophy. Therefore we first are going to explain different concepts of 'autonomy' and 'disease'. Subsequent to this we will test how the different conceptualizations of 'autonomy' and 'disease' can be related to each other and how the reasonable combinations shape possible answers to the opening question. It will become apparent that an adequate analysis of 'autonomy' and 'disease' raises ethical dilemma in psychiatry, for which we shall suggest possible solutions.