Dialogue 6

Science, Disability and ‘Deaf Culture’

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12 Noon, Friday, March 24, 2000
Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Room 207 (across from Library)

Lunch will be provided

Research on interventions to reduce or eliminate disability is shaped by a rich ensemble of challenges. For one thing, human subjects with disabilities are often regarded as vulnerable and hence entitled to extra protections, for example by the Americans with Disability Act. But in some cases, the interventions themselves — no matter how successful — are sometimes disdained by the very population the research is intended to help. This is especially the case with studies of cochlear implants and the controversy this occasions among members of what has come to be known as “Deaf Culture,” who deny that deafness is a disability in the first place. How are we to understand and respond to this apparent dichotomy?

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