

## Henrietta Lachs and the HeLa Cells

**Assignment Length: One typed page**

This assignment is a follow-up to the lab on karyotyping HeLa cells. Your job is to summarize background information about HeLa cells and then write your opinion on the controversy.

Your background information should include answers to questions like:

- Who was Henrietta Lachs? What is her background? Why did she die?
- Why did researchers want her cells?
- What did her cells do that other cells did not?
- What is informed consent? Did Henrietta give permission to use her cells? Why/why not?
- What are some things researchers have discovered using HeLa cells?
- Who has profited using HeLa cells?

After writing your background information, give your opinion, discussing the pros and cons, on the following question:

**If scientists or companies can commercialize a patient's cells or tissues, doesn't that patient, as provider of the raw material, deserve a say about it and maybe a share of any profits that result?**

**List at the end of your assignment the URL of any websites you use to gather your information.**

A few resources to help you:

Video Clip from CBS: "Hela Cell" History (Shown in class)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j0AkjXl2Yxk>

Video Clip: Henrietta Lacks' 'Immortal' Impact on Medical Research

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bm1q0TSFRMU>

NPR's RadioLab (an informative and fun show) has on segment on "Henrietta's Tumor" that you might enjoy.

<http://www.radiolab.org/story/91716-henriettas-tumor/>

Prologue to the book and news story on The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lachs

<http://www.npr.org/2010/12/13/132030076/henrietta-lacks-immortal-cells-live-on-in-labs>

NY Times: "A Lasting Gift to Medicine That Wasn't Really a Gift"

[http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/02/health/02seco.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/02/health/02seco.html?_r=0)

Smithsonian Magazine: "Henrietta Lacks' 'Immortal' Cells"

<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/Henrietta-Lacks-Immortal-Cells.html>

Popular Science: "Five Reasons Henrietta Lacks is the Most Important Woman in Medical History"

<http://www.popsci.com/science/article/2010-01/five-reasons-henrietta-lacks-most-important-woman-medical-history>

City Paper: "WONDER WOMAN

The Life, Death, and Life After Death of Henrietta Lacks, Unwitting Heroine of Modern Medical Science"

<http://www2.citypaper.com/news/story.asp?id=3426>