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Justice Between Generations and Non-Therapeutic Research on Children

Here's an argument from justice between generations that purport to show that it is not only permissible to let children take part in non-therapeutic medical research (i.e., research that isn't benefiting the child itself) but also a prima facie duty (Dan Brock, for example, has put forward an argument along these lines). An institutional structure for distribution of benefits and burdens is fair if it would be the choice of a self-interested individual behind a Rawlsian veil of ignorance where she doesn't know the particular feature of her life such as her gender, class, talents, skin colour, etc. Specifically, she doesn't know her age and to which generation she belong. Since children in the future may benefit from the medical knowledge that could be obtained from non-therapeutic research on children now and in the future, the individual behind the veil of ignorance has to weigh the risk of being a child that takes part in non-therapeutic research against the chance of being a child that benefits from the results of such research. If the expected benefits exceeds the expected burdens, then the individual behind the veil will choose an institutional structure where non-therapeutic research on children is not only permissible but also a prima facie duty. Since the likelihood of being a child that takes part in research is much less than the likelihood of being a child that benefits from the results of research (e.g., a drug that is tested on only a few children can benefit a vast number of children), this is a probable outcome of the deliberation behind the veil of ignorance. I shall develop this argument and evaluate its plausibility.