

U.S., Canada, begin trauma experiments

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The U.S. government is undertaking a set of controversial studies that allows some medical experiments without getting patients' permission.

The \$50 million project aims to improve treatment after car accidents, shootings, heart attack and other emergencies, the Washington Post reported Sunday. The five-year project will involve more than 20,000 patients at 11 sites in the United States and Canada.

The experiments aim to find better ways to resuscitate people whose hearts suddenly stop, to stabilize patients in shock and to limit damage from head injuries, the Post reported.

The patients often are unconscious at a time when every minute counts, so it can be impossible to get consent from them or their families, said organizers of the studies. The project is supported by many trauma experts and some bioethicists, while the harshest critics say the experiments violate fundamental ethical principles.

The U.S. National Institutes of Health authorized the study for medical centers doing research in Seattle, Portland, San Diego, Dallas, Birmingham, Pittsburgh, Milwaukee, Toronto and Ottawa, and in Iowa and British Columbia.

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