

# Citizens' Values Regarding Research With Stored Samples From Newborn Screening in Canada

**AUTHORS:** Yvonne Bombard, PhD,<sup>a</sup> Fiona A. Miller, PhD,<sup>a</sup> Robin Z. Hayeems, PhD,<sup>a</sup> June C. Carroll, MD,<sup>b</sup> Denise Avard, PhD,<sup>c</sup> Brenda J. Wilson, MBChB,<sup>d</sup> Julian Little, PhD,<sup>d</sup> Jessica P. Bytautas, BA,<sup>a</sup> Judith Allanson, MD,<sup>e,f</sup> Renata Axler, MBioethics,<sup>a</sup> Yves Giguere, MD, PhD,<sup>g</sup> and Pranesh Chakraborty, MD<sup>h,i</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Institute of Health Policy, Management and Evaluation, University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada <sup>b</sup>Department of Family and Community Medicine, Mount Sinai Hospital, University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada; <sup>c</sup>Centre for Genomics and Policy, Department of Human Genetics, McGill University, Montreal, Canada; <sup>d</sup>Department of Epidemiology and Community Medicine, University of Ottawa, Ottawa, Canada; <sup>e</sup>Department of Genetics, Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario, <sup>f</sup>Department of Pediatrics, University of Ottawa, Ottawa, Canada <sup>h</sup>Newborn Screening Ontario, Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario, University of Ottawa, Ottawa, Canada; and <sup>g</sup>Department of Medical Biology, Centre Hospitalier Universitaire de Quebec (CHUQ), University of Laval, Quebec City, Canada

## KEY WORDS

newborn screening, storage, blood spots, policy, public engagement, public health, research

## ABBREVIATION

NBS—newborn screening

Dr Miller led the study, and is the guarantor for the study. Drs Bombard, Miller, and Avard and Ms Bytautas and Axler conducted the focus groups. Drs Bombard and Miller and Ms Bytautas developed initial interpretations of the data and participated in data analysis. Dr Bombard drafted the manuscript; Drs Bombard and Miller revised the manuscript. Drs Hayeems, Allanson, Carroll, Chakraborty, Giguere, Little, and Wilson were involved in study design and oversight; they reviewed initial data analysis memos and suggested revisions to versions of the manuscript. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

[www.pediatrics.org/cgi/doi/10.1542/peds.2011-2572](http://www.pediatrics.org/cgi/doi/10.1542/peds.2011-2572)

doi:10.1542/peds.2011-2572

Accepted for publication Oct 31, 2011

Address correspondence to Fiona A. Miller, PhD, Institute of Health Policy, Management and Evaluation, University of Toronto, 155 College St, 4th Floor, Toronto, ON M5T 3M6, Canada. E-mail: [fiona.miller@utoronto.ca](mailto:fiona.miller@utoronto.ca)

PEDIATRICS (ISSN Numbers: Print, 0031-4005; Online, 1098-4275).

Copyright © 2012 by the American Academy of Pediatrics

**FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE:** *The authors have indicated they have no financial relationships relevant to this article to disclose.*

**COMPANION PAPERS:** Companions to this article can be found on pages 231 and 365, and online at [www.pediatrics.org/cgi/doi/10.1542/peds.2011-0970](http://www.pediatrics.org/cgi/doi/10.1542/peds.2011-0970) and [www.pediatrics.org/cgi/doi/10.1542/peds.2011-3416](http://www.pediatrics.org/cgi/doi/10.1542/peds.2011-3416).



**WHAT'S KNOWN ON THIS SUBJECT:** Newborn screening (NBS) programs may store bloodspot samples and use them for secondary purposes, such as research. Recent public controversies and lawsuits over storage and secondary uses underscore the need to engage the public on these issues.



**WHAT THIS STUDY ADDS:** This public engagement study identifies values underlying citizens' acceptance of and discomfort with research from NBS samples. Well-designed methods of public education and civic discourse on the risks and benefits of storage and secondary uses of NBS samples are required.

## abstract

FREE

**OBJECTIVES:** Newborn screening (NBS) programs may store bloodspot samples and use them for secondary purposes. Recent public controversies and lawsuits over storage and secondary uses underscore the need to engage the public on these issues. We explored Canadian values regarding storage and use of NBS samples for various purposes and the forms of parental choice for anonymous research with NBS samples.

**METHODS:** We conducted a mixed-methods, public engagement study comprising 8 focus groups ( $n = 60$ ), an educational component, deliberative discussion, and pre- and post-questionnaires assessing knowledge and values toward storage and parental choice.

**RESULTS:** Canadian citizens supported the storage of NBS samples for quality control, confirmatory diagnosis, and future anonymous research (>90%). There was broad support for use of NBS samples for anonymous research; however, opinions were split about the extent of parental decision-making. Support for a "routinized" approach rested on trust in authorities, lack of concern for harms, and an assertion that the population's interest took priority over the interests of individuals. Discomfort stemmed from distrust in authorities, concern for harms, and prioritizing individual interests, which supported more substantive parental choice. Consensus emerged regarding the need for greater transparency about the storage and secondary use of samples.

**CONCLUSIONS:** Our study provides novel insights into the values that underpin citizens' acceptance and discomfort with routine storage of NBS samples for research, and supports the need to develop well-designed methods of public education and civic discourse on the risks and benefits of the retention and secondary use of NBS samples. *Pediatrics* 2012;129:239–247

Controversies and lawsuits have emerged internationally over the storage and secondary use of samples collected through newborn screening (NBS),<sup>1–5</sup> a routine population program in most industrialized countries.<sup>6</sup> These lawsuits have challenged NBS programs' capacity to retain and make samples available for research without express parental consent. In British Columbia, Canada, a class action lawsuit claimed that storage of samples represented an unlawful search and seizure, violating the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The initial judgment rejected this claim but allowed that genuine issues remained, relating to "the use of the sample for purposes other than promoting the health of the infant"; thus, further legal action is likely.<sup>7</sup> In Minnesota, a similar case was resolved in the state's favor, but in Texas, the legal settlement led to significant change in the state's NBS program, with an increase in information for parents and the destruction of nearly 5 million stored NBS samples.<sup>2,8</sup> These cases exemplify the controversy that policy makers face in responding to numerous contentious issues linked with the storage and secondary uses of NBS samples. Many programs retain NBS samples to facilitate confirmation of results, quality control, and postmortem diagnosis<sup>9,10</sup>; however, they may also be used for purposes unrelated to the initial NBS program, including research, public health surveillance, and occasional nonmedical purposes (eg, identifying disaster victims or law enforcement proceedings).<sup>11,12</sup> As an unbiased, population-wide source of data, NBS samples are especially valuable for research. Consequently, they have been used in epidemiologic research on infectious diseases, environmental exposures, and the etiology of birth defects.<sup>13</sup>

Controversies regarding the storage and secondary use of NBS samples

raise anew the issue of parental consent for NBS. Explicit informed consent for NBS is uncommon in North America (NBS is strongly encouraged in Canada and mandatory in most US states, with consent not required in either country)<sup>14,15</sup>; yet, consensus is lacking regarding the appropriateness of this approach for the secondary use of stored NBS samples, and whether informed consent, of a general or specific nature, should be obtained before NBS samples may be used in research.<sup>16</sup> On the one hand, several commentators object to the lack of explicit informed consent for NBS generally,<sup>17,18</sup> and have suggested that individuals be given choices about the use of their samples for research.<sup>17</sup> Opponents argue that explicit consent should not be introduced because of high costs, limited capacity to inform parents,<sup>19,20</sup> and fears that consent processes for secondary uses may threaten NBS uptake.<sup>15, 21</sup> In addition, some contend that research with unidentified NBS samples poses minimal risk and should not require consent.<sup>22–24</sup> Further, most international guidance permits secondary research on NBS samples without explicit consent under certain conditions.<sup>16</sup> In Canada, policy regarding the storage and secondary uses of NBS samples differs across provinces,<sup>8,9,25–27</sup> and remains underdeveloped. Few programs explicitly discuss the storage of NBS samples in publicly available educational material, or offer the opportunity to remove samples after a specific period of time.<sup>28,29</sup>

Given these contentions, various stakeholders' views have been explored. Most studies have found that parents, providers, and the public are willing to store infants' samples for research.<sup>15,30–32</sup> Findings regarding the need for parental consent vary by jurisdiction, stakeholder, and methods used, however<sup>21,30–34</sup>; moreover, the values underpinning these positions remain

unexplored. Understanding these values is crucial for informing the development of evidence-informed public health interventions and policy initiatives.<sup>21,35</sup> Further, recent controversies and lawsuits underscore the need to understand public values on these issues.<sup>5,36</sup> Thus, we conducted a public engagement study to explore Canadian citizens' values regarding storage of NBS samples for various purposes and types of parental choice for anonymous medical research.

## METHODS

### Study Design

This mixed-methods study was designed to explore Canadian values regarding the scope of NBS and issues related to storage and secondary use of NBS samples.

### Sample Recruitment

With approval from the University of Toronto Health Sciences Research Ethics Board and the McGill University Research Ethics Board, participants were recruited in the Greater Toronto and Montreal Areas in 2009. To generate a sample that was broadly representative of the community and fostered socioeconomic, age, and family-life diversity (eg, marital status, parenthood, etc), we worked through community agencies serving families and advertised through related forums. Only adults and those able to consent in English were included; no other exclusion or inclusion criteria were applied.

### Data Collection

#### Focus Groups

Semistructured focus groups were conducted, each of which included: an educational component, deliberative discussion, and pre- and post-questionnaires assessing knowledge and values toward NBS. The educational component covered the purposes of

storing NBS samples and the types of biomedical or health services research for which they are used. These topics were circulated as a pamphlet ~1 week before each focus group. The topics were reviewed before the session began. Discussions were guided by showcards that used a story with several “reveals” or outcomes, and were followed by questions on which the group was asked to deliberate (Appendix).

### *Educational Component, Questionnaire, and Administration*

The educational component, pamphlet, and questionnaire were developed by a multidisciplinary team, based on a review of the literature,<sup>16,34,37,38</sup> and pretested with 10 individuals using cognitive interviewing techniques to assess comprehension, readability, and face and content validity. Knowledge was assessed by using 9 true/false questions about NBS, storage, and consent. The questionnaire assessed values about storing NBS samples for various purposes, and parental choice for anonymous research, by using 5-point Likert scales. We chose to focus on anonymous medical research (with identifying information removed, and linkage to other datasets possible through nonidentifying codes), as this reflects the current approach in Canada and most other jurisdictions. Questionnaires were administered at the start (before the topics were reviewed) and end of each focus group.

### **Data Analysis**

Responses to the knowledge questions were summed to produce a “knowledge score” (range: 0–9). The Wilcoxon signed ranks test was used to assess differences between pre- and post-focus groups’ knowledge scores; 2-sided *P* values of <.05 indicated statistical significance. Attitude data from the post-questionnaire were analyzed

descriptively; Likert-scale items were trichotomized (ie, strongly agree, agree versus strongly disagree, disagree versus neutral). Data were managed and analyzed using SPSS 18.0 (SPSS Inc, Chicago, IL).

Discussions were transcribed verbatim and analyzed using a modified grounded theory approach,<sup>39–41</sup> based on the principles of constant comparison<sup>42</sup> and qualitative description.<sup>43</sup> Participants’ views on storage were analyzed to identify major themes that supported, or were critical of, storage and secondary uses of NBS samples, and types of parental consent for such purposes. Thematically coherent arguments were identified and then fully described to capture underpinning values. Thematic arguments were then contrasted with, and modified by, emergent data. Themes are summarized below as supportive and critical arguments for storage and secondary use, and types of parental consent.

## **RESULTS**

### **Study Participants**

Eight focus groups were conducted with a total of 60 participants (5 focus groups in the Toronto area, *n* = 36; 3 focus groups in the Montreal area, *n* = 24). Most participants were women (60%), single/separated/divorced or widowed (60%), and had at least some postsecondary education (87%). Participants’ ages were as follows: 27% were 18 to 29 years old, 43% were 30 to 49, and the remaining were older than 50 (Table 1).

### **Questionnaire Results**

#### *Knowledge*

Participants’ mean knowledge significantly increased from the beginning to the end of the focus groups, from 6.87 (SD: 2.68) (pre) to 7.80 (SD: 2.12) (post), *P* < .0001.

**TABLE 1** Characteristics of the Participants

	Total ( <i>n</i> = 60)	
	<i>n</i>	%
Gender		
Female	36	60.0
Age, y		
18–29	16	26.7
30–49	26	43.3
50+	18	30.0
Marital Status		
Single/separated/divorced/widowed	35	59.3
Married/common law/living with partner	24	40.7
Education		
High school and below	8	13.3
Some college or university and above	52	86.7
Children		
One or more children	25	43.1

### *Attitudes Toward Storing Infant Blood Samples for Various Purposes*

Large majorities (>90%) agreed (strongly agree or agree) to storing NBS samples for quality control, confirmatory diagnosis, and anonymized research; about half agreed to storage for forensic investigations (54%) or unspecified purposes (50%) (Table 2).

### *Attitudes Toward Types of Parental Consent for Anonymous Research With Stored Samples*

Most agreed that parents should be strongly encouraged to have their infant’s sample stored for research purposes (77%) and be able to choose without pressure (77%); about half agreed that parents should be required to have their infant’s blood stored (52%) (Table 3).

### **Qualitative Findings**

There was broad support within and across focus groups for storing NBS samples for anonymous research; however, opinions were split about the use of NBS samples for research, and whether parents should be given a choice. Two arguments about parental

**TABLE 2** Support of Storage and Secondary Uses of NBS Samples

<i>Q: "I think that it is appropriate to keep dried blood spots in a storage facility....."</i>		
	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
...to allow the people who run the newborn screening program to make sure it is working properly (ie, quality control) ( <i>n</i> = 58)		
Agree <sup>a</sup>	57	98
Neutral	1	2
Disagree <sup>b</sup>	0	0
... to be available for physicians or families in case they need to check on a child's diagnosis ( <i>n</i> = 58)		
Agree <sup>a</sup>	57	98
Neutral	1	2
Disagree <sup>b</sup>	0	0
... to be available as a resource for future anonymous medical research (when approved by a research ethics board) ( <i>n</i> = 58)		
Agree <sup>a</sup>	53	91
Neutral	2	3
Disagree <sup>b</sup>	3	5
... to be available as a resource for law enforcement purposes (with a court order) ( <i>n</i> = 57)		
Agree <sup>a</sup>	31	54
Neutral	3	5
Disagree <sup>b</sup>	23	40
... to be available as a resource for unspecified future uses ( <i>n</i> = 58)		
Agree <sup>a</sup>	29	50
Neutral	10	17
Disagree <sup>b</sup>	19	33

<sup>a</sup> Respondents checking "strongly agree" and "agree" were included in this category.

<sup>b</sup> Respondents checking "strongly disagree" and "disagree" were included in this category.

**TABLE 3** Support of Various Forms of Parental Consent for Storage of NBS Samples for Anonymous Research

<i>Q: "Where newborn screening programs store dried blood spots as a resource for future anonymous medical research, I think..."</i>		
	<i>Total</i>	
	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
...parents should be required to have their infant's dried blood spot stored ( <i>n</i> = 56)		
Agree <sup>a</sup>	29	52
Neutral	4	7
Disagree <sup>b</sup>	23	41
...parents should be strongly encouraged to have their infant's dried blood spot stored ( <i>n</i> = 57)		
Agree <sup>a</sup>	44	77
Neutral	7	12
Disagree <sup>b</sup>	6	11
...parents should be able to choose without pressure whether they want their infant's dried blood spot stored ( <i>n</i> = 56)		
Agree <sup>a</sup>	43	77
Neutral	6	11
Disagree <sup>b</sup>	7	13
...dried blood spots should not be stored ( <i>n</i> = 55)		
Agree <sup>a</sup>	8	15
Neutral	5	9
Disagree <sup>b</sup>	42	76

<sup>a</sup> Respondents checking "strongly agree" and "agree" to these questions were included in this category.

<sup>b</sup> Respondents checking "strongly disagree" and "disagree" to these questions were included in this category.

choice emerged around 3 themes: the level of trust in authorities, level of concern for harms, and extent to which participants prioritized population or individual interests (Fig 1 presents a thematic overview). Participants generally agreed, however, that there was insufficient transparency in storage practices, and called for improved efforts at informing parents that NBS samples are stored for secondary purposes.

### Support for Research

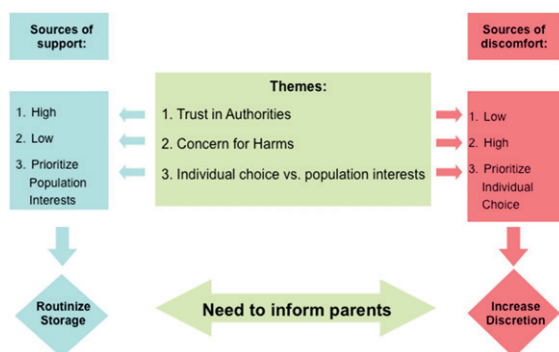
There was broad support among participants for storing samples for research. Some stated this explicitly, [I am] "big proponent of it [samples] being used for research. I think that's a great thing" [Tracy] (pseudonyms are used to protect participants' identities). They highly valued research because of the "advances that have been made in science" [Mandy].

### Sources of Support

Among many participants, support for research justified a "routinized" approach to parental choice, which emerged from a perception that the population's interest trumped the interests of individuals, authorities could be trusted, and potential harms were not concerning (Table 4).

These participants were highly supportive of a population-based resource for research and emphasized the importance of high participation rates to preserve its integrity. Although conceding that individuals might not wish to take advantage of NBS, they argued that "society" has an expansive interest in knowledge, best harnessed when there is broad participation in these databases:

"I think there are a lot of research benefits that can come from testing these kids, to finding [discoveries]. And, even if you don't want to know and I think you have a right not to know—I think society might have a right to know what the prevalence of these diseases are." [Tracy]



**FIGURE 1**

Thematic framework of participants' values toward the storage and secondary uses of NBS samples.

At 1 extreme, some argued that the value of an unbiased database might justify a rather coercive approach to participation in storage. Indeed, for these participants, the potential benefits from research “outweighed” [Francis] the opportunity to offer parents choices:

“I believe that research is more important. I think that the health of our country is an obligation for all of us and that this should be mandated.” [Diana]

For these participants, support for a routinized approach for parental choice stemmed from trust in authorities that govern research and the comfort offered by anonymized samples. This participant's support for storage for research hinged on her “trust in the governing bodies”:

“I have trust in the governing body to use it appropriately and I really hope that they do. I hope that they can make improvements and, you know, to other people's lives. I don't mind sharing for that purpose.” [Diana]

Some assumed that the general public would be supportive of the endeavor because the benefits of storage for research were clear, and the risks minimal. However, others were less convinced, harboring concerns about governance mechanisms for storage and research use of samples.

### Sources of Discomfort

Criticism toward routinized storage emerged from a distrust in authorities, concern about potential harms, and prioritization of individual over population

interests. These values underpinned support, among some, for a substantive degree of parental choice for storage for research purposes (Table 4).

Criticism stemmed, in part, from perceived lack of transparency. Some were surprised when they learned that NBS samples are already stored and available for research. This engendered suspicion:

“Like, I'm all for the research part, but how come we don't know that? ... I may think there's something maybe that you're not telling, you know... Like, ok, you must be hiding something.” [Valerie]

Some disagreed with the assumption that the public would support all research. Others questioned the appropriateness of mechanisms governing research approval, and suggested that these mechanisms may not align with individuals' values:

“One might say just because a research ethics board approves it doesn't mean it's my ethics. You know, the board is approving it, but maybe I think something differently. Maybe they want to do research for something that I don't agree with for whatever reason.” [Martina]

Some were concerned with the “blanket consent” for NBS that was used to imply consent for storage and research with stored samples:

“So for you to say yes to your doctor thinking that it's going to be used for your baby, that's not true because it's actually going to be used for broader population between now and 30 years from now. So, are you consenting for that?” [Adrian]

Others were concerned about the security of storage facilities or “nervous” [Tracey] that samples might fall into the wrong hands, such as insurers or other “corporations” [Aisha].

In light of these concerns, some critics preferred a more meaningful form of parental choice for storage for research. Although they found short-term storage for quality control and confirmatory diagnosis acceptable, they did not feel it was appropriate to have consent for screening in a “package” [Avery] with consent for storage for research:

“By virtue of the fact that I agree to the testing does not mean that I agree to the storage of my baby's blood. So, I think that that's 2 different things. I think if my child was determined to have an illness and there was a positive, I would agree to a short-term storage because then you can revisit that blood and you can do your quality control checks and, you know, you can check it against others. I think that's valid and I could agree to that, but for an indefinite period of time, that requires a different type of consent.” [Evelyn]

Despite these disparate views on the value and degree of consent for storage for research, one issue was uniformly clear: the need to inform parents.

### Sources of Agreement: The Imperative to Inform Parents

A theme that was persistent across respondents in discussions about storage was the need to inform parents that storage for secondary use occurred following NBS. Information was considered a necessary precondition to create some minimal opportunity for parents to opt out.

For many, an informational pamphlet that included “2 to 3 lines” about anonymous storage of samples and potential use, with a link to a Web site, was considered sufficient. These participants believed that responsibility to seek further information rested with the parents. However, some others valued the opportunity to engage in a dialogue and a decision-making “process.”

**TABLE 4** Supplemental Quotes Regarding Participants' Sources of Support and Discomfort

Sources of Support:	Sources of Discomfort:
Some reasoned that anonymizing samples protected them from possible harms: "I'm fine with, like, my kid's blood being kept indefinitely as long as it's anonymous. It's not doing any harm to anyone. It's never going to have any repercussions. By allowing them to use this blood for research, you're never saying that, somewhere down the road, an insurance company can say, oh, well, your blood got tested for this and you have this disease so we're not going to cover you. It's not admissible for anything else. It's just for the purposes of their anonymous research and for quality control. So if it never has any repercussion to the kid, then I don't see any harm in it." [Sheryl]	Some suspected that others might not feel comfortable with all types of research: "I can foresee there are certain types of research that not everyone is going to be ok with; probably even a majority of Canadians would not be OK with." [Tracey] Others were concerned about the security of storage facilities or "nervous" [Tracey] that samples might fall into the wrong hands, such as insurers or other "corporations" [Aisha]: "It could be subpoenaed later to get... or, like, someone can request and through a court get a court order to go and get this genetic material that belongs to your baby. That I find I'm a little more nervous about." [Tracey] "One of the corporations is going to pay for all these blood samples which is there thousands. And they might be using it for different purposes." [Aisha]
Others assumed that the general public would be supportive of the endeavor because the benefits of storage for research were clear. For example, this participant wondered why storage for research would even be questioned: "What are the consequences? I don't understand why it's even a problem. Why wouldn't anybody want [the samples] stored for further research? Why are they even asking? Like, why are you asking?" [Joan]	Some also questioned the limits of the secondary uses of the samples for research. One critic explained her concern about the lack of governance of these "secondary purposes": "And there is a risk because you don't know. Once it's out of someone's hand and there's a secondary purpose, you don't know what the end result will be. You don't know where that end user might possibly be." [Evelyn]
Some believed the benefits of research outweigh the risks: "There will always be negatives, you know, but I think the true research outweighs [them]." [Francis]	Some did not feel it was appropriate to have consent for screening in a "package" with consent for storage for research: "I think they [parents] should have an option. It shouldn't be a package of yes or no for everything." [Avery]

"Access to information to me is really important and involving me in the process and giving me the option to agree or disagree means a lot to me. That's the difference between whether or not I pursue a lawsuit or not...But, if you don't give me the option to say 'yay' or 'nay' and you take that choice away from me—no way. I don't care what it is. I have a hard time surrendering choice, you know. Even if it's something small like a spot of baby's blood." [Evelyn]

Participants agreed it was important to inform parents so they would feel respected, otherwise they believed parents might feel that they were taken advantage of.

## DISCUSSION

Our quantitative data demonstrate strong support among Canadian citizens

for storage of NBS samples for quality control, confirmatory diagnosis, and future anonymous research. In addition, our data suggest ambivalence about the type of parental consent that should be implemented for retention and research with NBS samples, as equal proportions preferred that parents be strongly encouraged to have their infant's sample stored and be able to choose without pressure regarding storage.

Our qualitative findings echo these results and provide some insight into the values underpinning these positions. In particular, we show that Canadian citizens' acceptance of or discomfort with a routinized approach to research with stored samples varied

along axes of trust, concern for harms, and individual versus collective interests. In addition, our qualitative findings point to consensus on the need for greater transparency about the storage and secondary use of NBS samples.

The strong support for use of NBS samples for research identified is consistent with several other studies.<sup>30,31,34,44</sup> The desire to advance research and sense of trust that motivated support for research in our study resonates with others on biobanking.<sup>44–46</sup> The equivocal stance regarding choice that we found is also consistent with other literature.<sup>31,33,47–51</sup> Although explicit permission is endorsed by some potential participants, most are supportive of future research on anonymous samples,<sup>47,48</sup> because they rely on ethics committees to judge the value and rigor of studies for which their samples would be used.<sup>52</sup> Collectively, these findings imply that the Canadian public is supportive of the storage and secondary uses of NBS, provided that an informed and transparent process exists that describes the purposes of storage and uses as well as the safeguards in place to protect the samples and ensure privacy and confidentiality.

Our study provides novel insights into the values that underpin these positions. We found that trust in authorities, lack of concern for harms, and an assertion that the population's interest took priority over the individual's interest appeared to justify a "routinized" approach to parental choice regarding storage of samples, whereas the lack of trust, concern for harms, and prioritization of individuals' interests justified more meaningful parental choice. Importantly, Canadian citizens uniformly called for increased efforts to inform parents about storage and secondary uses of samples.

Understanding these values is crucial for informing the development of evidence-informed public health

interventions and policy initiatives. These values provide clear direction regarding the need to inform the public about retention and secondary use of NBS samples and the safeguards in place for their protection. Indeed, greater public awareness may alleviate concerns about harms, lack of transparency and preserve public trust: an approach echoed by one commentator in a response to this impending “public policy emergency.”<sup>36</sup>

Our value elicitation exercise does not provide clear direction regarding parental choice, however, in part because the balance between individual and collective interests is difficult to establish, and because this balance concerns a research enterprise that is situated within a public health program. Although some participants were uncomfortable with having consent for storage and secondary use effectively “packaged” into the consent structure for NBS, others accepted it. These positions are consistent, on the one hand, with discourse that supports the need for more active forms of parental decision-making<sup>17,53–56</sup> and, on the other, with pragmatic arguments endorsing a “packaged” consent structure because it maintains high participation in NBS and storage,<sup>15,21</sup> and because the capacity to inform parents about NBS itself in addition to sample retention

and secondary use is limited.<sup>17,19,38,57</sup> Ultimately, although public engagement exercises may elucidate values, enhance transparency, and inform policy, they may not necessarily provide explicit policy direction.

There are several limitations to our study. We explored one form of governance—parental consent—among a highly educated and unrepresentative sample. Research exploring other forms of governance (eg, ethics boards, oversight committees, different forms of control over use, and identifiability of research samples) with generalizable samples, in other countries and with underrepresented communities, is warranted. Finally, we focused on research with “anonymous” data, but recognize that developments in genetics and genomics make it possible to identify individuals even within pooled “anonymous” datasets.<sup>58</sup>

## CONCLUSIONS

Despite these limitations, our study demonstrates Canadian citizens’ strong support for storage of NBS samples for quality control, confirmatory diagnosis, and future anonymous research; and provides novel insights into the values that underpin their acceptance and discomfort with routine storage of NBS samples for research. Our findings support the need to de-

velop well-designed methods of public education and civic discourse on the risks and benefits of the retention and secondary use of NBS samples.

## APPENDIX: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS—NBS STORAGE AND SECONDARY USES

Here are some questions to consider:

1. Were you aware that NBS blood spots are stored?
2. Were you aware that NBS blood spots are used for medical research?
3. What are the perceived benefits and risks raised with storing and using NBS blood spots?
4. Should the anonymous dried blood spots be shared with researchers?
5. Should parents be informed and/or give consent for their use in anonymous research?
6. Should consent be required for their use in anonymous research, from the individual/parent, each and every time a dried blood spot is used for research?
7. How long should the dried blood spots be kept?
8. Should children be asked for their consent for the use of their dried blood spot when they reach the age of legal majority?

## REFERENCES

1. Nine Families Sue State of Minnesota—Allege Violations of State Genetic Privacy Law in Newborn Screening. *Medical News Today*. May 12, 2009
2. Wilson N. Newborn DNA samples to be destroyed suit: secret genetic testing on newborns improper. *KXAN*. December 22, 2009. Available at: [www.kxan.com/dpp/news/texas/settlement-in-newborn-dna-lawsuit](http://www.kxan.com/dpp/news/texas/settlement-in-newborn-dna-lawsuit). Accessed August 12, 2010
3. Neergaard L. Newborn testing faces challenges in using leftover blood spots for research. *The Associated Press* 2010. Available at: <http://lifestyle.ca.msn.com/health-fitness/news/canadianpress-article.aspx?cp-documentid=23423878>. Accessed August 12, 2010
4. Armstrong J. Storage of newborns’ blood samples raises privacy concerns. *The Globe and Mail*. May 11, 2010: S1
5. McLean E. Protocols’ secrecy queried. *Otago Daily Times*. April 23, 2011. Available at: [www.odt.co.nz/news/dunedin/157327/protocols-secrecy-queried](http://www.odt.co.nz/news/dunedin/157327/protocols-secrecy-queried). Accessed May 18, 2011
6. Bombard Y, Miller FA, Hayeems RZ, et al. The expansion of newborn screening: is reproductive benefit an appropriate pursuit? *Nat Rev Genet*. 2009;10(10):666–667
7. *L.D. (Guardian ad litem of) v. Provincial Health Services Authority*. In: *BCSC 628*; 2011
8. Barr G. Staking the public trust on newborn dried blood spot retention: how the Beleno and Bearder decisions may impact Canadian newborn metabolic screening processes. *Health Law Rev*. 2010;18(3):30–38

9. Laberge C, Kharaboyan L, Avar D. Newborn screening, banking and consent. *GenEdit*. 2004;2(3):1–15
10. Avar D. Research and public health surveillance using newborn bloodspots in Canada. In: Knoppers BM, ed. *Genomics and Public Health Legal and Socio-Ethical Perspectives*. Leiden, South Holland: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers; 2007:111–126
11. Pass KA, Thoene J, Watson MS. Emergency preparedness for newborn screening and genetic services. *Genet Med*. 2009;11(6):455–464
12. Penchaszadeh VB. Genetic identification of children of the disappeared in Argentina. *J Am Med Womens Assoc*. 1997;52(1):16–21, 27
13. Olney RS, Moore CA, Ojodu JA, Lindegren ML, Hannon WH. Storage and use of residual dried blood spots from state newborn screening programs. *J Pediatr*. 2006;148(5):618–622
14. Mandl KD, Feit S, Larson C, Kohane IS. Newborn screening program practices in the United States: notification, research, and consent. *Pediatrics*. 2002;109(2):269–273
15. Avar D, Vallance H, Greenberg C, Laberge C, Kharaboyan L, Plant M. Variability in the storage and use of newborn dried bloodspots in Canada: is it time for national standards? *Genomics Soc Policy*. 2006;2(3):80–95
16. Kharaboyan L, Avar D, Knoppers BM. Storing newborn blood spots: modern controversies. *J Law Med Ethics*. 2004;32(4):741–748
17. Ross LF. Mandatory versus voluntary consent for newborn screening? *Kennedy Inst Ethics J*. 2010;20(4):299–328
18. Paul D. Contesting consent: the challenge to compulsory neonatal screening for PKU. *Perspect Biol Med*. 1999;42(2):207–219
19. Hayeems RZ, Miller FA, Little J, et al. Informing parents about expanded newborn screening: influences on provider involvement. *Pediatrics*. 2009;124(3):950–958
20. Clayton EW, Steinberg KK, Khoury MJ, et al. Informed consent for genetic research on stored tissue samples. *JAMA*. 1995;274(22):1786–1792
21. Richer J, Ghebremichael MS, Chudley AE, Robinson WM, Wilfond BS, Solomon MZ. Research use of leftover newborn bloodspots: attitudes of Canadian geneticists regarding storage and informed consent requirements. *Genet Med*. 2011;13(4):305–13
22. Knoppers BM, Laberge CM. Research and stored tissues. Persons as sources, samples as persons? *JAMA*. 1995;274(22):1806–1807
23. Tarini BA, Burke W, Scott CR, Wilfond BS. Waiving informed consent in newborn screening research: balancing social value and respect. *Am J Med Genet C Semin Med Genet*. 2008;148C(1):23–30
24. Maschke KE. Ethical and policy issues involving research with newborn screening blood samples. In: Baily MA, Murray TH, eds. *Ethics and Newborn Genetic Screening: New Technologies, New Challenges*. Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press; 2009: 237–254
25. Reis N. Stored blood samples: controversy rages over privacy and consent. *The Lawyers Weekly*. April 29, 2011; 15-16
26. Caulfield T, Knoppers BM. *Consent*. Ottawa, Canada: Privacy & Research Biobanks; 2010
27. Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technologies in Health. *Newborn Screening for Disorders and Abnormalities*. Ottawa, Canada: Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technologies in Health; 2011
28. Araia MH, Potter BK. Newborn screening education on the Internet: a content analysis of North American newborn screening program websites. *J Community Genetics*. 2011;2(3):127–134
29. Miller FA. Policy for the storage and use of residual dried blood spot specimens after newborn screening: the view from Canada. In: *International Congress on Human Genetics*. Montreal, Quebec; October 11-15, 2011
30. Davey A, French D, Dawkins H, O'Leary P. New mothers' awareness of newborn screening, and their attitudes to the retention and use of screening samples for research purposes. *Genomics Soc Policy*. 2005;1(3):41–51
31. Tarini BA, Goldenberg A, Singer D, Clark SJ, Butchart A, Davis MM. Not without my permission: parents' willingness to permit use of newborn screening samples for research. *Public Health Genomics*. 2010;13(3):125–130
32. Fujii C, Sato Y, Harada S, et al. Attitude to extended use and long-term storage of newborn screening blood spots in Japan. *Pediatr Int*. 2010;52(3):393–397
33. Rothwell E, Anderson R, Botkin J. Policy issues and stakeholder concerns regarding the storage and use of residual newborn dried blood samples for research. *Policy Polit Nurs Pract*. 2010;11(1):5–12
34. Muchamore I, Morphet L, Barlow-Stewart K. Exploring existing and deliberated community perspectives of newborn screening: informing the development of state and national policy standards in newborn screening and the use of dried blood spots. *Aust New Zealand Health Policy*. 2006;3(14):1–9
35. Task Force on Newborn Screening. Serving the family from birth to the medical home. *Pediatrics*. 2000;106(2):386
36. Tarini BA. Storage and use of residual newborn screening blood spots: a public policy emergency. *Genet Med*. 2011;13(7):619–620
37. Kerruish NJ, Robertson SP. Newborn screening: new developments, new dilemmas. *J Med Ethics*. 2005;31(7):393–398
38. Hargreaves KM, Stewart RJ, Oliver SR. Informed choice and public health screening for children: the case of blood spot screening. *Health Expect*. 2005;8(2):161–171
39. Yin RK. *Case study research: Design and methods (3rd ed.)*. Thousand Oaks: Sage; 2003
40. Patton MQ. *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*. 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications; 2002
41. Charmaz K. Grounded theory: objectivist and constructivist methods. In: Denzin NK, Lincoln YS, eds. *The Handbook of Qualitative Research*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications; 2000:509–535
42. Strauss A, Corbin J. *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications; 1998
43. Sandelowski M. Whatever happened to qualitative description? *Res Nurs Health*. 2000;23(4):334–340
44. Stolt UG, Liss PE, Svensson T, Ludvigsson J. Attitudes to bioethical issues: a case study of a screening project. *Soc Sci Med*. 2002;54(9):1333–1344
45. Secko DM, Preto N, Niemeyer S, Burgess MM. Informed consent in biobank research: a deliberative approach to the debate. *Soc Sci Med*. 2009;68(4):781–789
46. Godard B, Marshall J, Laberge C. Community engagement in genetic research: results of the first public consultation for the Quebec CARTaGENE project. *Community Genet*. 2007;10(3):147–158
47. Chen DT, Rosenstein DL, Muthappan P, et al. Research with stored biological samples: what do research participants want? *Arch Intern Med*. 2005;165(6):652–655
48. Wendler D, Emanuel E. The debate over research on stored biological samples: what do sources think? *Arch Intern Med*. 2002;162(13):1457–1462
49. Fleck LM, Mongoven A, Marzec S. *Stored Blood Spots: Ethical and Policy Challenges*. East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University; 2008



50. Willison DJ, Swinton M, Schwartz L, et al. Alternatives to project-specific consent for access to personal information for health research: insights from a public dialogue. *BMC Med Ethics*. 2008;9:18
51. Murphy J, Scott J, Kaufman D, Geller G, LeRoy L, Hudson K. Public perspectives on informed consent for biobanking. *Am J Public Health*. 2009;99(12):2128–2134
52. Wendler D. One-time general consent for research on biological samples. *BMJ*. 2006; 332(7540):544–547
53. Hargreaves K, Stewart R, Oliver S. Newborn screening information supports public health more than informed choice. *Health Educ J*. 2005;64(2):110–119
54. Fant KE, Clark SJ, Kemper AR. Completeness and complexity of information available to parents from newborn-screening programs. *Pediatrics*. 2005;115(5):1268–1272
55. Therrell BL, Jr;Hannon WH, Bailey DB Jr; et al. Committee report: considerations and recommendations for national guidance regarding the retention and use of residual dried blood spot specimens after newborn screening. *Genet Med*. 2011;13(7):621–624
56. Maschke KE. Disputes over research with residual newborn screening blood specimens. In: *The Hastings Center Report—Bioethics Forum*. Garrison, NY: The Hastings Center; 2009. Available at: [www.thehastingscenter.org/Bioethicsforum/Post.aspx?id=3826](http://www.thehastingscenter.org/Bioethicsforum/Post.aspx?id=3826). Accessed December 29, 2011
57. Clayton EW. Talking with parents before newborn screening. *J Pediatr*. 2005;147 (suppl 3):S26–S29
58. Homer N, Szelingier S, Redman M, et al. Resolving individuals contributing trace amounts of DNA to highly complex mixtures using high-density SNP genotyping microarrays. *PLoS Genet*. 2008;4(8): e1000167

**CELEBRATING WITH GOOSE:** *“That is the most exotic bird we have here and is almost never served” wrote my friend from Thailand. We were swapping recipes for the holiday meals and in particular what I planned to serve for Christmas Eve dinner. I had written that I was going to follow family tradition and serve goose. My wife and I have been serving goose most Christmas Eve dinners for the past 25 years. The tradition started while living in Germany. We lived in a small town and really enjoyed going to the local butcher for our meat. The week before our first Christmas in Germany we asked the butcher for “ein Ganz, bitte” (our German was never very good but eventually he got the idea). We had no idea what we were doing but we cooked the bird in our tiny kitchen. I am not sure how good it was but our friends seemed happy enough. Since then we have tried a variety of cooking methods (including rendering the fat over steaming water). It always tastes good and makes for an enjoyable, if quite expensive, feast. As reported in Saveur (Techniques: December 2, 2011), goose has long been a feast dish. In Western Europe, goose historically was most often served on the feast day of the Archangel Michael, which occurs at the end of September. In Jewish communities, geese were fattened in the autumn for butchering at the beginning of the winter season, roughly the time of Hanukkah. The Pilgrims brought domesticated geese with them and goose was a popular feast dish until displaced by the turkey in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Of course, the most famous feast goose is the one served by the Cratchit family in Charles Dickens’ “A Christmas Carol.” Never has a cooked goose been so exalted. Our goose rarely moves people to such rapture but being able to serve such a majestic bird makes us pause to consider our good fortune, connect with friends, and think about those who are less fortunate. Maybe next year, my friend from Thailand will be able to join us. Now that would be a holiday feast.*

*Noted by WVR, MD*

## Citizens' Values Regarding Research With Stored Samples From Newborn Screening in Canada

Yvonne Bombard, Fiona A. Miller, Robin Z. Hayeems, June C. Carroll, Denise Avard, Brenda J. Wilson, Julian Little, Jessica P. Bytautas, Judith Allanson, Renata Axler, Yves Giguere and Pranesh Chakraborty

*Pediatrics* 2012;129;239

DOI: 10.1542/peds.2011-2572 originally published online January 16, 2012;

<b>Updated Information &amp; Services</b>	including high resolution figures, can be found at: <a href="http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/129/2/239">http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/129/2/239</a>
<b>References</b>	This article cites 39 articles, 5 of which you can access for free at: <a href="http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/129/2/239.full#ref-list-1">http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/129/2/239.full#ref-list-1</a>
<b>Subspecialty Collections</b>	This article, along with others on similar topics, appears in the following collection(s): <b>Medical Education</b> <a href="http://classic.pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/collection/medical_education_sub">http://classic.pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/collection/medical_education_sub</a> <b>Fetus/Newborn Infant</b> <a href="http://classic.pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/collection/fetus:newborn_infant_sub">http://classic.pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/collection/fetus:newborn_infant_sub</a>
<b>Permissions &amp; Licensing</b>	Information about reproducing this article in parts (figures, tables) or in its entirety can be found online at: <a href="https://shop.aap.org/licensing-permissions/">https://shop.aap.org/licensing-permissions/</a>
<b>Reprints</b>	Information about ordering reprints can be found online: <a href="http://classic.pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/reprints">http://classic.pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/reprints</a>

Pediatrics is the official journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics. A monthly publication, it has been published continuously since . Pediatrics is owned, published, and trademarked by the American Academy of Pediatrics, 141 Northwest Point Boulevard, Elk Grove Village, Illinois, 60007. Copyright © 2012 by the American Academy of Pediatrics. All rights reserved. Print ISSN: .

American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™



# PEDIATRICS®

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS

## **Citizens' Values Regarding Research With Stored Samples From Newborn Screening in Canada**

Yvonne Bombard, Fiona A. Miller, Robin Z. Hayeems, June C. Carroll, Denise Avard, Brenda J. Wilson, Julian Little, Jessica P. Bytautas, Judith Allanson, Renata Axler, Yves Giguere and Pranesh Chakraborty

*Pediatrics* 2012;129;239

DOI: 10.1542/peds.2011-2572 originally published online January 16, 2012;

The online version of this article, along with updated information and services, is located on the World Wide Web at:

<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/129/2/239>

Pediatrics is the official journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics. A monthly publication, it has been published continuously since . Pediatrics is owned, published, and trademarked by the American Academy of Pediatrics, 141 Northwest Point Boulevard, Elk Grove Village, Illinois, 60007. Copyright © 2012 by the American Academy of Pediatrics. All rights reserved. Print ISSN: .

American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™

