



Therapeutic and Enhancement Uses of Neuroscientific Knowledge: A Question of Individual Autonomy?

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"The results of neuroscientific research have both therapeutic and enhancement uses. The prospect of its becoming possible to cure so far intractable neurological and psychiatric diseases is typically welcomed. In contrast, reactions to the idea that normal human mental capacities could be expanded by neuroscientific means has been significantly more negative. A central concern with the neuroscientific enhancement of human mental capacities relates to a cornerstone of liberal societies, individual autonomy. The aim of the project is to assess how personal autonomy is to be understood in light of the latest neuroscientific and philosophical research and compare how, if at all, therapeutic and enhancement uses of neuroscientific knowledge differ from each other from the viewpoint of autonomy. The project will also determine how personal autonomy relates to other values - such as wellbeing, dignity, and justice - deemed pertinent to determining the moral and legal acceptability of using neuroscientific knowledge to modify human mental capacities.

The planned examination helps to assess the moral and legal permissibility of therapeutic and enhancement uses of neuroscientific knowledge and promotes our understanding of the proper ways of conceiving of ourselves as agents. Besides being of philosophical importance, the expected results of the project can be employed in concrete decision-making relating to the uses of the knowledge produced by neuroscience."