

# The Tuskegee Study: *Miss Evers' Boys*

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**Applicable Courses:** Any course dealing with research ethics or diversity.

**Approximate Time to Complete:** 118 minutes (length of the film).

**Purpose:** To illustrate the importance of informed-consent procedures, institutional review board (IRB) policies, and discrimination and diversity issues in medicine.

**Materials Needed:** *Miss Evers' Boys* film on DVD or VHS.

**Description:** Film is a powerful teaching tool that has been used in the classroom for years. Finding films that have instructional value for use in an athletic training education program, however, can be difficult, especially when one is looking for films rated PG. *Miss Evers' Boys* is an HBO film available on DVD or VHS for less than \$10.00 from reputable online stores such as Video Universe (<http://www.videouniverse.com/>) or Amazon (<http://www.amazon.com/dvd>). The film portrays research abuses and tragic consequences that resulted from the Tuskegee syphilis study. This U.S. Public Health Service study was originally projected to last 6 months but spanned 40 years, from 1932 to 1972. We use the film in our research methods courses as a discussion starter to introduce research ethics, the importance of informed consent, IRB procedures, and diversity issues in professional practice.

**Suggestions:** Athletic training educators sometimes report having limited time for showing films in class. Therefore, this teaching strategy can be used either as

an out-of-class assignment or in-class activity. For out-of-class use, educators can put the film on reserve in the library or schedule "movie night" as a club activity or social event.

## Discussion Questions

The sample discussion questions below can be used in either oral or written format.

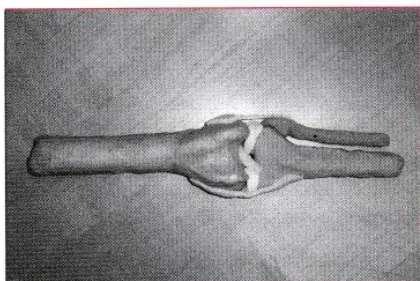
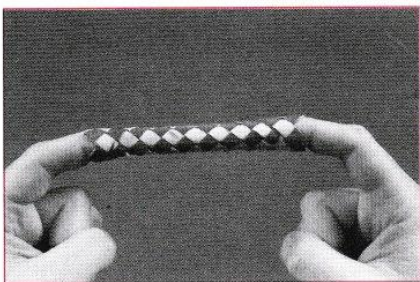
- What surprised you the most?
- Which scenes did you find depressing or sad?
- Which scenes did you find inspiring or motivational?
- What role did gender play in the Tuskegee study?
- What role did race play in the Tuskegee study?
- What were the cultural and interpersonal forces that permitted the Tuskegee study to continue for 40 years?
- What events, both in the United States and around the world, occurred during the time of study that might help us understand why the study was conducted?
- Why is it important to obtain informed consent? How might informed consent have changed the outcome of this study?
- How can athletic trainers ensure that research is conducted ethically and professionally? ■

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*Includes a special section on*  
**CREATIVE TEACHING  
TECHNIQUES**



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