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Today I will be talking about the ethical considerations involving the Little Albert experiment.

There are many ethical considerations and issues involving the Little Albert case, one of them being the lack of consent. Considering Albert was only an infant, he was unable to give any consent for this experiment. Some people have even suggested that Alberts mother was not fully informed about this experiment and didn't give her full consent to go through with this experiment.

In this experiment, John Watson and Rosalie Raynor demonstrated classical conditioning to an infant. This experiment could have left Little Albert with a lifelong fear of what they exposed Little Albert to. This could have effected Albert in many ways, such as emotional distress, and potentially forming a permanent fear. Another ethical consideration that goes along with this is the fact that nobody tried to decondition Little Alberts fear after the experiment, leaving him with this phobia potentially for life.

Another ethical consideration is the use of a vulnerable person, in this case being an infant. This is considered unethical in many ways. Lack of protection from harm is also involved in this case and is considered unethical also. John Watson and Rosalie Raynor even went as far as putting on a mask to scare the child even more than they had already.

Also, another ethical consideration is the deliberate infliction of psychological harm. This is because they intended to give little albert a phobia by creating loud noises while a white rat was present which conditioned him into being frightened by the white rat. This caused little albert to be afraid of the white rat and even other furry things, even a Santa Claus mask. Little Albert even started showing signs of distress even when the loud noises were not being made.

The researches did not provide any sort of debriefing after the experiment and did not give Little Albert the follow up after care they were supposed to give. Little Albert was even taken out of the experiment by his mother before any of this could have happened.

References

SPP Team. (2024). Criticisms of the little Albert experiment. *Lack of Consent and use of a Vulnerable Subject*. Simply put psych.