Business ethicists generally believe that it is ethical to hire someone for a dangerous job as long as the employee gives informed consent, the pay is fair, and risks are minimized. Most medical ethicists hold a sharply different view on the ethics of recruiting human subjects in medical research. Medical research that presents net risk to subjects must have social value to be ethical, in addition to satisfying informed consent, fair pay, and risk minimization requirements. Using the doctrine of double effect, this article argues that the prevailing view in medical ethics is correct and that a similar principle applies to employment. Hiring people for dangerous jobs is morally permissible only if workers could have reasons other than wages to value their work. In general, it is wrong to hire people for dangerous, unskilled jobs whose social function is to provide luxuries to the unjustly well-off.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2017, 12:00 – 1:30 P.M.
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