This timely collection analyses and evaluates ethical and social implications of recent developments in reporting surgeon performance. It contains chapters by leading international specialists in philosophy, bioethics, epidemiology, medical administration, surgery and law, demonstrating the diversity and complexity of debates about this topic, raising considerations of patient autonomy, accountability, justice and the quality and safety of medical services. Performance information on individual cardiac surgeons has been publicly available in parts of the US for over a decade. Survival rates for individual cardiac surgeons in the UK have recently been released to the public. This trend is being driven by various factors, including concerns about accountability, patients’ rights, quality and safety of medical care and the need to avoid scandals in medical care. This trend is likely to extend to other countries, to other clinicians, and to professions beyond health care, making this text an essential addition to the literature available.

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Informed Consent and Clinician Accountability

The Ethics of Report Cards on Surgeon Performance

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Acknowledgements

A proper assessment of the issues raised in this volume requires drawing on expertise in philosophy and bioethics, along with expert knowledge of factors influencing surgical performance, clinical practice, the measurement and reporting of healthcare outcomes, relevant studies in healthcare quality and safety, professional regulation, and practitioner and consumer views on report cards. Accordingly, we have gathered contributions from philosophers and bioethicists, along with surgeons and other health professionals, epidemiologists, regulators and lawyers.

This collection had its origins in a workshop, organized by the editors, entitled ‘Publicizing performance data on individual surgeons: the ethical issues’. The workshop was held at the University of Melbourne in November 2004. A report on the workshop appears in the *Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia’s* on-line journal *Dialogue* (Clarke and Oakley, 2005). The chapters contained in this volume authored by Silvana Marasco and Joe Ibrahim, Tony Eyers, Yujin Nagasawa, Justin Oakley, Stephe Bolsin and Liadain Freestone, Steve Clarke, Adrian Walsh, Neil Levy, Merrilyn Walton and David Macintosh are all descendants of papers first presented at this workshop. Also present at the workshop, and heavily involved in discussions, were David Neil, Merle Spriggs, Ian Freckelton and Mike Parker, who have contributed chapters. Funding for the initial workshop from which this book developed was generously provided by the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia and by the Centre for Applied Philosophy and Public Ethics. Thanks to all who participated in the workshop and to Richelle Maclean, Seumas Miller and Mark Pinoli for their help and encouragement. The workshop arose from a 3-year research project funded by National Health and Medical Research Council project grant # 236877, led by Oakley and Clarke, entitled *An ethical analysis of the disclosure of surgeons’ performance data to patients within the informed consent process.*

To produce a balanced volume that better reflects the international nature of research on healthcare performance assessment, particularly in relation to
issues of accountability, we invited contributions by Tom Sorell, Paul Aylin, Paul Barach and Michael Cantor. Also reproduced here, and the subject of much discussion in this volume, is 'Informed consent and surgeons’ performance’, by the editors of this volume, Steve Clarke and Justin Oakley, *The Journal of Medicine and Philosophy*, 29(1) (2005), pp. 11–35. Copyright © *The Journal of Medicine and Philosophy*, Inc., reprinted with permission. Thanks to the editors of this journal for permitting reproduction of this article. The contribution by Rachel Werner and David Asch is a slightly revised version of a recent article, ‘The unintended consequences of publicly reporting quality information’, which first appeared in *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, 293(10) (2005), pp. 1239–1244. Copyright © 2005, American Medical Association. All rights reserved. Thanks to the editors of this journal for permission to reproduce this article.

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Reference