

Conference call

Public Health – Ethical Issues 30–31 August 2010



Hotel Saga in Reykjavík, Iceland

Challenging ethical questions in public health often focus on the tension between individual liberty rights and governmental measures aimed to improve the health of the public. Thus, among the questions raised in this conference are: Whose responsibility is health? How should access to care be determined? To what extent and at what cost should equality be provided for? Should there be financial incentives for improving health? When is screening appropriate? What constitutes a just health care system? What is the relationship between health and the good life?

The Nordic Committee on Bioethics provides a forum for these discussions with expert input and a stimulus for lively discussions.

Participation is free of charge

To register for the conference please send an email to Lotta Knutsson Bråkenhielm, secretary@ncbio.org, *no later than August 20.*

For further information about the conference contact the organizing committee:

Asgeir Haraldsson, asgeir@landspitali.is

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Thomas G. Jensen, thomas@humgen.au.dk

Vilhjálmur Árnason, vilhjarn@hi.is

For practical information and registration:

Lotta Knutsson Bråkenhielm, secretary@ncbio.org.

Program Day 1

8.00 Registration and coffee

Session I: Individual Freedom vs Public Welfare

In this session, the focus will be on the tension between efforts to maintain public health and the right of individuals to conduct their own lives. What are the limits of individual liberty in this regard, and what are the limits of rightful interference of the authorities in the life of individuals?

Chair: Vilhjálmur Árnason – Nordic Committee on Bioethics

9:00–10:00 Opening lecture: **Ethics in public health: is it really needed as a discipline?**
Anders Foldspang, Dean of The Nordic School of Public Health, Gothenburg

10:00–10:30 **The Ethics of Infectious Disease Control**
Haraldur Briem, Chief Epidemiologist, Directorate of Health, Iceland

Coffee break

10:45–11:15 **Liberty – Trump or one Value Among Many?**
Kalle Grill, lecturer, Stockholm Centre of Healthcare Ethics

11:15–12:45 **Population Screening: Neonatal Screening as an Example**
Helena Kääriäinen, Research professor, National Institute for Health and Welfare, Finland
AND
Challenging Population Screenings
Stefán Hjörleifsson, Associate professor, Department of Public Health and Primary Health Care, University of Bergen

12:45–13:00 **General discussion**

Lunch

Session II. Health, Responsibility and Life-style

In this session, the focus will be on common diseases and health problems that are related to life style. What are the most efficient and fair ways to deal with these problems? Should we try to modify life style by appealing to individuals or should we make changes in the social environment and by taking political measures such as taxation on unhealthy consumption etc.?

Chair: Ásgeir Haraldsson - Nordic Committee on Bioethics

14:00–14:30 **Individual and Societal Responsibilities for Maintaining Health**
Ole Færgeman, Emeritus professor of Preventive Cardiology, Aarhus University Hospital

14:30–15:00 **Obesity: a Personal Illness or a Public Problem?**
Ástríður Stefánsdóttir, Associate professor of Ethics, University of Iceland

15:00–15:30 **Lifestyle Economics**
Tinna Laufey Ásgeirsdóttir, Assistant professor of Economics, University of Iceland,

Coffee break

16:00 –16:30 **Is There a Right to Live an Unhealthy Life?**
Bjørn Hofmann, Professor of Medical Ethics, University College of Gjøvik and University of Oslo

16.30- 17.15 **Health and the Good Life**
Pekka Louhiala, University lecturer in Medical ethics, Department of Public Health, University of Helsinki

17.00- 17.15 **Final discussion**

Program Day 2

Session III: Social Equality and Justice

In this session, the focus will be on the social determinants of health and the implications of that for public health care and just distribution of health care resources. What is the status of vulnerable groups, such as immigrants and the elderly, in our Nordic system of socialized health care? How can the right to health care be understood in light of the fact that there is a need to prioritize services?

Chair: Sirpa Soini – Nordic Committee on Bioethics

8:15–9:00 **Social Determinants of Public Health**
Geir Gunnlaugsson, National Director of Health in Iceland

9:00–9:30 **The Biology of Poverty**
Harry Burns, Chief Medical Officer, Scotland

Coffee break

9:45–10:15 **Vulnerable Population Groups and Priority Setting**
Janne Nikkinen, Postdoctoral researcher in Social Ethics,
University of Helsinki

10:15–10:45 **Samis as a Minority Patient-group**
Ketil Lenert Hansen, Centre for Sami Health, University of Tromsø

10.45–11.00 **Closing of the Meeting**
Chair of NCBio Thomas G. Jensen

Lunch



Louisa Matthíasdóttir, *View from Sólvallagata*
(courtesy of the estate of Louisa Matthíasdóttir)



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Nordic Committee on
Bioethics

The Nordic Committee on Bioethics was founded in 1989 to promote Nordic cooperation and exchange of information between scientists, parliamentarians, opinion leaders and public officials in the area of bioethics.

The Committee has two members from each Nordic country. Members are appointed for three years at a time by the Nordic Council of Ministers from the nominations of the Nordic countries.

The mission of the Nordic Committee on Bioethics is to foster co-operation between the Nordic countries by bringing together representatives from different backgrounds to discuss and analyse issues in bioethics in order to achieve greater awareness, promote common understanding and improve policy in this area.

For further information: www.ncbio.org

Chairman 2010:

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