

From justice to protection: a proposal for public health bioethics

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Deskripsi Lengkap: <https://lib.ui.ac.id/detail?id=20410726&lokasi=lokal>

Abstrak

This book pleads for an urgent turn towards directly addressing injustice as a reality that requires pressingly needed arguments and proposals to inspire realistic public health policies and programs based on an ethics of protection. Ever since Hobbes, all shades of political philosophy accept that the basic obligation of the ruling power is to protect its subjects. The ethics of protection emphasizes aiding the needy and the disempowered in obtaining access to basic goods and services related to health-care. Public health is called upon to fulfill protective obligations to guarantee disease prevention and medical services to the population, taking special care to safeguard those unable to cover their health-care needs in market-oriented medical services and institutions. The bioethics of protection developed in this text presents specific and explicit guide-lines to assure that protective public health actions be efficacious (problem-solving), efficient (sustainable cost/benefit relation) and ethically sound (respecting human rights and the common weal). These guide-lines are designed to give ethical support and justification to public health policies even when they require some unavoidable limitations of individual autonomy to promote social health benefits.