

Philosophy, Politics and Economics of Health

Master in Philosophy of Science

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Week 3 – Improving Health in a Complex World

1. **Evidence-based medicine**

*Describe the basic tenets of evidence-based medicine.*

*What are some of the main challenges that RCTs face?*

*Why are RCTs single (or double) blinded?*

Consider the following quote by Deaton and Cartwright:

“If we knew enough about the problem to control well, that is what we would (and should) do. Randomization is an alternative when we do not know enough to control, but is generally inferior to good control when we do.” (2018, 5)

*Explain and discuss this statement.*

1. **Evidence-based policy**

*What are some differences between clinical trials and public policy when it comes to the use of RCTs?*

*Why is external validity hard to obtain in evidence-based policy?*

*If RCTs are so problematic, what is the alternative?*

1. **Thought experiments**

*Is internal and external validity relevant to thought experiments?*

1. **Next Week: Justice and the Social Determinants of Health**

*Readings:*

Chapter “Measuring and Combatting Health-Related Inequalities” in James Wilson, *Philosophy for Public Health and Public Policy (required)*

Jonathan Wolff, “Equality: The Recent History of an Idea” *(recommended)*