

Philosophy, Politics and Economics of Health

Master in Philosophy of Science

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Week 4 – Justice and the Social Determinants of Health

1. **Health inequality and inequity**

*What is the inverse care law, and why might it generate a feedback loop between the numbers of doctors and health outcomes?*

*When is a health inequality unjust?*

1. **Egalitarianism and its critics**

*What is the “levelling down objection” to egalitarianism? Does the difference principle resolve the resulting dilemma?*

*What distinguishes prioritarianism from egalitarianism?*

*Is utilitarianism insensitive to the distribution of wealth?*

*You have fixed resources that could be used to make a group of relatively well-off people much better off, or an (equally sized) group of miserable people slightly better off. What do utilitarianism, egalitarianism, and prioritarianism imply for your choice of policy?*

1. **Varieties of egalitarianism**

*What do “direct egalitarian views” imply for health equity? Why does Wilson favour an indirect approach?*

*Should an alcoholic pay for the treatment that is caused by his drinking himself?*

*What about anti-vaxxers?*

1. **Next Week: Paternalism, the Common Good, and the Right to Public Health**

*Readings:*

Jessica Flanigan, “Seat Belt Mandates and Paternalism” (required)

Chapter “Paternalism, Autonomy, and the Common Good”, in James Wilson, *Philosophy for Public Health and Public Policy* (recommended)