A Moral Framework for Public Health Ethics & Prevention: What’s the Fuss?

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Increased attention is being paid to special moral frameworks for public health. This has generated some controversy. The emphasis on communities and populations rather than individuals or the physician-patient relationship means that some dilemmas in public health differ in relevant ways from those in clinical practice or research. A proposed framework will be examined in relation to practical dilemmas in public health and prevention, such as screening mammography and direct-to-consumer genetic testing.

Dr. Wasson is a Fellow in the Ethics of Prevention and Public Health at the National Cancer Institute. She worked for five years as a clinical bioethicist with a palliative care team in London. Her research interests include moral frameworks in public health and bioethics, ethical issues surrounding genetic technology and end-of-life issues.

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