

This response was submitted to the consultation held by the Nuffield Council on Bioethics on *Public Health: ethical issues* between May and September 2006. The views expressed are solely those of the respondent(s) and not those of the Council.

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## **PART A**

### Responsibilities of individuals

People should not be free from interference by the state ----- . There should be some control from the authoritative body, other wise everybody will start growing opium and do coke our country will become Afghanistan. Should there not be control for Co2 emission?

If people deliberately or negligently behave to harm their health and if it can be proved, then they should not be entitled for free NHS treatment (its similar to tobacco, when tobacco companies are accountable for peoples ill health as a result of smoking, negligent behaviour on part of people is not acceptable)

Yes, health risks arising from lifestyle changes should be evaluated in same way Health foods should be obliged to supply information about the ingredients and their normal requirements and implications of overdose as in salt in ready meals. Tobacco and alcohol industries are obliged to warn the consumers about their risks. Certainly these communities play a major role in promoting public health.

### 2) list of questions

1. Definition: Yes I agree with the definition
2. genetic background and preventive factors should be given more importance
3. vaccination: vaccination should be mandatarly , otherwise why should we have immunisation at all. We should think of small pox as an example, this was eradicated by mass immunisation.
4. infectious disease: forced quarantine is justified if the infection is transmitted from person to person, till the infectious person is rendered safe. Serious out breaks in other counties can affect our country, screening and preventing people and quarantine are the measures the govt should consider. Highly infectious diseases like HIV needs to be screened before getting a VISA in other countries through the British high commissioner.
5. Obesity: If the obese person has seen a GP/ Consultant and if he has been warned about dangers of obesity and if this person continues to be obese and not make efforts to lose this physiological obesity, then this person should be given warning, may be 3 times in a year and if no progress is made to improve this persons life style, then this person should be made to pay fine. Parents need to be educated about the dangers of obesity and they in turn have obligation to maintain their children's weight. the food industry must specify the ingredients and their caloric contents. Schools play an important role in educating parents and children about obesity. School food providers must provide a balanced diet with fruits. The govt must monitor the food industry, school and the providers in giving a balanced diet and fine the appropriate people for default.

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6. Smoking: One of the reasons for not implementing antismoking measures could be because of tobacco lobby. The revenue from tax probably too tempting for any government to accept the ill effects of smoking. At least our government can learn from nations like Ireland who have banned smoking in public places as there is enough evidence to show that passive smoking is as bad as smoking itself. Companies which make hazardous substances have responsibilities to mention about the product and its adverse effects. The companies should be prosecuted for damaging public health and they should also contribute to costs for treatment. Tobacco and its adverse effects are very well known despite this there are companies manufacturing tobacco related products. Smokers should not be entitled to higher than average resources from public healthcare system as the injuries are self inflicted because of smoking knowingly. Other groups of people who deliberately or negligently increase their chances of requiring public health resources should be asked for increases contributions. The state has every right to prevent people from smoking because of the dangers / adverse effect of smoking
7. Alcohol: I think the effect of alcohol on the body is under estimated, especially in the younger people. It not only affects the liver, it is also responsible for harm to society because of violence. I think we are too soft on alcohol, we should not encourage 24 hours binge drinking. Instead of having 24 hours drinks pub, we should go back on the traditional stopping at 11 PM and also strictor breath testing for drivers.
8. flouridification
9. Ethical issues: fair reciprocity, trus and harm principle are more important than autonomy, solidarity and consent. Consent is such controversial term, for instance consent is required for doing any research trial. I feel its such a grey area, is there any body policing the consent

## **Part B**

I do agree that the five factors are the main influences affecting public health and they are all equally important and some times interactive. I would give more prominence to genetic and preventive factors though all factors are important.

### **Questions on control of infectious disease**

To obtain herd immunity, vaccination should be made compulsory, when USA and France can make it compulsory why not us?

Forced quarantine is very important in controlling spread of deadly infection. I don't think it will infringe on civil liberties, what about the person who has no infection and could get one from another person if that person is not quarantined. Is this not infringing civil liberties of that person who is going to get infection for some body not being quarantined ?

Quarantine people from a deadly infectious country to ours.

We have an obligation to protect our people weather from infection or invasion. So mandatory testing of people from other countries for HIV and TB is totally justified.

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### **OBESITY**

Early detection and prevention of florid obesity I feel should be adapted. School health screening should be done to measure weight, calculate BMI and take early action. This can be done by school nurse as it is not very difficult. Parents should encourage sports, and encourage healthy foods and not junk ( its easy said than done). Food industry should take steps like tobacco industry in not only warning the people about the danger of fatty food but also encourage healthy food, mention their caloric value.

Schools should play a much wider role as children who are more prone for obesity can be detected early. Ban junk foods in school premises including sale of junk near the school like in corner shops. School-food providers should offer healthy food in meal.