

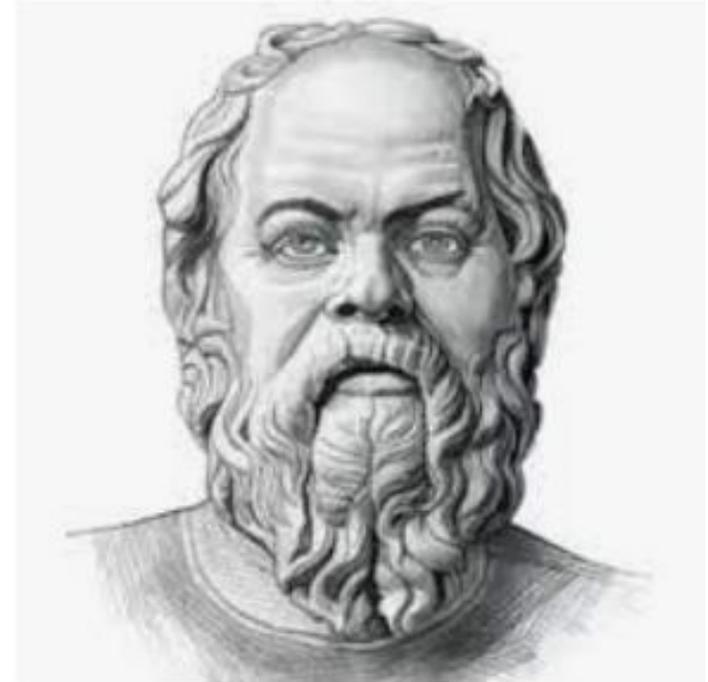
Vaccines: A Philosophical and Biological Perspective

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STEAM Event 2022

Philosophy is literally the “love of wisdom”

- And the key insight of the philosophy of classical antiquity is that intellectual humility is a necessary condition of wisdom; we must interrogate our own beliefs and strive to understand others, because the position that is initially most appealing to us may prove to be mistaken upon further investigation.



Ethics is Philosophy

- Ethics, or moral philosophy, is one of the main areas of philosophy, alongside epistemology and metaphysics.
- Ethics provides tools to examine test cases, to stress-test our intuitions, and to find guiding principles that permit a systematic and rationally-defensible approach to addressing moral problems.
- In the spirit of wisdom-seeking, this entails identifying reasons that would loom large in the thinking of others, and to acknowledge tensions between values.
- This means that reaching a conclusion can only take place *after* hearing and understanding the best arguments for different points of view.

The moral tension surrounding COVID Vaccination Mandates:

Individual liberty vs. collective responsibility/the greater good.

When they are in tension, which should take priority?



The tension should be resolved in favor of *the greater good*

- Vaccines incur few individual costs relative to collective benefits
- Failure to achieve mass vaccination may be associated with enormous collective *and* individual risk relative to individual benefits.
- There is precedent for mandatory vaccination in Western, liberal democracies (mandatory vaccination can be consistent with liberalism and/or individualism)



The tension should be resolved in favor of *the individual*

- While mandatory vaccination may be best in minimizing the risk posed by COVID, the enforcement of vaccination requirements entails an unacceptable coercion of individuals in religious, social, and economic spheres.
- While vaccination may be best now, enforcing vaccination requirements now will lead to unacceptable restrictions of individual liberty later.
- Politicians will use whatever tools necessary not only to maintain social control but also to become even more powerful; a health mandate provides additional excuses for growing state power.
- There is legal precedent for prioritizing the individual over the collective in the health arena, especially when individuals are motivated by religious belief (e.g., *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby*)

Which position is correct?

- Which is supported by the best arguments?
- Which entails the least unacceptable conclusions in related cases?
- Which creates the fewest explanatory problems?

...Perhaps it's best just to take PHIL 140!

Earliest Vaccine Mandates

- Smallpox was the first vaccine
 - Variolation was done prior to 1796, true vaccination was done after this time.
- Gen. Washington started in 1777 having all new recruits vaccinated as they joined the continental army so that they would be recovered in time to fight. Regular troops were not inoculated at first. Lord Jeffery Amherst was known to give smallpox laden blankets to the Native Americans in hopes of giving smallpox to the Continental soldiers hiding in their villages.
- 1809 Massachusetts was the first state known to have mandatory vaccination laws.

Requirement for treatment of disease

- Typhoid Mary
 - In the early 1900's Mary Mallon infected over 50 people with typhoid fever, she continued to work as a cook and was finally forcibly quarantined for over 2 decades.
- Tuberculosis
 - Currently you can be confined to a treatment facility for up to 6 months to prevent the transmission of Tuberculosis (TB) after several preliminary steps.
 - [Confinement in a Facility | Case Management | State TB Prevention & Control Laws | TB Laws & Policies | Resources & Tools | TB | CDC](#)
 - NYC banned spitting in public in 1896 to prevent TB, many cities followed this method of prevention. (This law was also used to prevent transmission of influenza during the 1918/1919 pandemic)

State Mandates on Immunization and Vaccine-Preventable Diseases (immunize.org)

Vaccine-Specific Requirements

- ▶ DTaP: Child Care, Elementary
- ▶ HepA: Child Care, K-12
- ▶ HepB: Child Care, K-12
- ▶ HepB: College / University
- ▶ Hib: Child Care
- ▶ HPV: Elementary / Secondary
- ▶ Influenza: Child Care
- ▶ MenACWY: Elementary / Secondary
- ▶ MenACWY: College / University
- ▶ MMR: Child Care, K-12
- ▶ Pneumo (PCV): Child Care
- ▶ Polio: Child Care, Elementary
- ▶ Rota: Child Care
- ▶ Tdap: Elementary / Secondary
- ▶ Varicella: Child Care, K-12

Life Expectancy improvement since 1900

- If born in 1900 your life expectancy was 48 yrs
- If born in 2015 your life expectancy was 79 yr.
- There are several reasons for this increase; antibiotics and vaccines are some of the biggest factors.

- Vaccine and treatment mandates are nothing new to the US and have been upheld by the Supreme Court.
- Vaccine hesitancy has been around since the first vaccines were discovered.
- How do we encourage vaccination for the good of society while balancing the rights of all parties (vaccinated and unvaccinated)?
- How do we turn vaccines into vaccinations?
- What is the right balance of “carrots” and “sticks”?