



# Ethical Considerations for Climate Change and Population Health

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# ISEE Ethics and Philosophy Committee

- Established in 1991 (23 years ago); always ready to receive interested new members
- We address ethical and philosophical underpinnings at the nexus of environment and health
- We sponsor symposia; maintain and develop new ethics guidelines; offer recommendations and definitions; provide moral support to victimized colleagues
- We strive to be proactive about current and future ethical challenges
- We interact continually through e-mail communications, newsletter updates, conference calls, and during the annual ISEE conferences
- **Are you aware of the ISEE Ethics Guidelines for Environmental Epidemiologists - Revised April, 2012? Have you read them?**

(Kramer S, Soskolne CL, Mustapha BA, Al-Delaimy WK, 2012 Revised Ethics Guidelines for Environmental Epidemiologists. *Environ Health Perspect* 120(8): doi:10.1289/ehp.1205562 and <http://www.iseepi.org/About/ethics.htm>)

# The aims of this discussion

- To facilitate dialogue about the ethical dimensions relevant to the topic and presentations heard in this session in the following areas:
  - hypothesis formulation
  - recruitment
  - design
  - methods
  - conduct
  - analysis
  - interpretation
  - dissemination of work
  - data archival and sharing
- To raise awareness and promote greater ethical transparency and accountability.
- Our purpose is **NOT** to seek retribution or to point fingers at the studies that have been presented today, but rather to learn from them to improve ethical standards in future studies in different social and geographical contexts.

# Ethics - Principles

## From Bioethics

- **Respect for autonomy:** respecting the right of participants to self-determine the extent of their participation
- **Beneficence:** doing good through our research
- **Non-maleficence:** doing no harm
- **Social/Distributive Justice/ Fairness:** who is deriving benefits and who is taking risks?

## From Public Health and Environmental Epidemiology

- Protect the Most Vulnerable
- The Precautionary Principle
- Environmental Justice
- Scientific Integrity
- Protect the Public Interest Over Any Other Interests
- Others ...

# Background

- Climate change is accelerating unabated, with major public health implications of a global nature, including changes in infectious disease patterns.
- Pressure from climate change deniers also continues unabated, creating doubt and uncertainty in the public mind and for policy-makers.
- Countries contributing to the problem are not the ones being most impacted.

# Questions

What research questions might we address?

- Coastal city impacts from storms and rising sea levels
- The spread of vector-borne diseases to regions where local populations have no immunity
- Questions of justice  
Questions of education & risk communication
- Questions of population-growth as a driver
- Questions of adaptation

# ISEE Ethics and Philosophy Committee - Contact Information

- [http://www.iseepi.org/About/ethics\\_cmte.htm](http://www.iseepi.org/About/ethics_cmte.htm)

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- **New members are welcome!**

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# ISEE Ethics Guidelines for Environmental Epidemiologists - Revised April 2012

Visit:  
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