

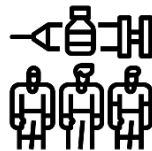
Every two weeks, our team provides you with an overview of the most recent publications in the field of bioethics, with a particular focus on contributions coming from (or having relevance for) Switzerland.

Buona lettura! Bonne lecture ! Viel Spass beim Lesen! Enjoy the reading!

The editors: Andrea Martani, and Maddalena Favaretto.

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PUBLIC HEALTH ETHICS



“Face mask uptake in the absence of mandates during the COVID-19 pandemic: a qualitative interview study with Swiss residents”

Almost two years after the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the obligation to wear masks in many public spaces is still ongoing in several countries. In this interview-based study, Zimmermann and colleagues reflect on the experiences of Swiss residents in relation to the use of masks between the first and second wave of infections in 2020. The findings include reflections on the interplay between mandates and personal responsibility, and on the role that (not) having legal obligations to wear mask can have in undermining trust in public authorities and on peoples’ perception of socially acceptable behaviour (or sense of social exclusion).

Zimmermann, B.M., Eichinger, J., Schönweitz, F. et al. Face mask uptake in the absence of mandates during the COVID-19 pandemic: a qualitative interview study with Swiss residents. *BMC Public Health* 21, 2171 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-021-12215-4>

“The second pandemic: Examining structural inequality through reverberations of COVID-19 in Europe”

Since the COVID-19 epidemic started, it is common to hear concerns about (public) health be pitted against concerns about promoting economic wealth. On the contrary, Fiske et al. focus on the interconnections of these two allegedly opposing poles. Drawing from almost 500 interviews carried out across Europe (Switzerland included), they show that in peoples’ perception of the epidemic health and wealth are strictly linked. This permits the author to illustrate how there is widespread awareness that COVID-19 revealed structural problems concerning how health and wealth are distributed. They thus prompt us to reflect that – if we have care for these values (health and wealth) – it will be necessary to tackle them after and beyond the epidemic.

Fiske A, Galasso I, Eichinger J, McLennan S, Radhuber I, Zimmermann B, Prainsack B. The second pandemic: Examining structural inequality through reverberations of COVID-19 in Europe. *Soc Sci Med.* 2021 Dec 4;292:114634. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2021.114634> .

THEORETICAL BIOETHICS



As Switzerland is in the midst of another surge of COVID19 and of another (booster) vaccination campaign, this editorial contribution by Shaw is particularly timely. The author invites readers to reflect that any discussion on the potential side effects of vaccines (both at the individual and national level) should include also a discussion on the “side effects” of not getting vaccinated. In so doing, the author acknowledges that public health choices are often multifaceted – for example, the decision of a country to stop distributing a specific vaccine when doubts on its side effects emerge “may have been motivated by a wish to avoid vaccine hesitancy”. However, he reminds us that there is a sort of tragic irony in the fact that remote side effects of vaccines are often given much attention, whereas “very serious causative side effects of refusing or delaying vaccination are not considered at all.”

Shaw, D. The Side Effects of Not Being Vaccinated: Individual Risk and Vaccine Hesitancy Nationalism. *Bioethical Inquiry* (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11673-021-10141-z>