

Influencing Health Policy through Public Deliberation: Lessons learned from two decades of Citizens'/Community Juries

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Bio:

Chris is a Research Fellow at the Centre for Values, Ethics and the Law in Medicine. He returned to Australia after completing a Postdoctoral Fellowship at the Population Health Intervention Research Centre at the University of Calgary, having previously been in veterinary practice in Australia and the UK. His research and teaching interests revolve around the the social and cultural dimensions of public health and the ethics and politics of human health interactions with nonhuman animals. His research is inter-disciplinary, and draws together insights from Science and Technology Studies (STS) and and social and normative theories. He is the author of numerous articles on issues ranging from animal experimentation, to diagnostic innovation and biosecurity. Current projects include the use of deliberative methods in health policy, the politics of One Health, and the ethics of cancer screening.

Abstract:

Citizens'/community juries [CJs] engage members of the public in policy decision-making processes. CJs can be employed to develop policy responses to health problems that require the consideration of both community values and scientific evidence. Based on the principles of deliberative democracy, recent reviews indicate that findings from CJs have successfully been used to influence health policy decision-making.

Despite this evidence of success, there appears to be a gap between the goals of health researchers who organize CJs and the needs of policy actors and decision makers. Drawing on our experiences working with CJs and recent research on CJ methods, I provide a synopsis of the current state of the art organized around four key questions, and informed by insights from deliberative theory and critical policy studies. My intention is to stimulate further discussion as to the types of health policy questions that can be usefully addressed through public deliberation, and provide guidance on the methodological and political dimensions that need to be considered in deciding whether a CJ is an appropriate approach for informing a policy decision-making process