

Autumn 2007

Public health: do we need more state interference?

How and when the state should intervene in our lives for our own good has been a hotly debated topic since the beginning of organised society. To shed more light on the issues, the Nuffield Council on Bioethics has published a report, *Public health: ethical issues*, which considers the responsibilities of governments, individuals and other parties, such as the food and drink industry, in achieving a healthy society.

Public health measures are designed to improve health across the population. In the past, they have included vaccination schemes, the provision of clean water, and banning smoking in public places. Some measures are more restrictive than others.

Measures that target health problems caused by alcohol, smoking and obesity tend to restrict personal behaviour. Although restrictions on smoking have been a recent government priority, the Council recommends that more coercive strategies to manage alcohol consumption could be implemented in the UK. For example, increasing taxes on alcoholic drinks has been shown to be an effective

strategy for reducing consumption. With regards to obesity, the Council recommends that if the food industry does not adopt the most effective food labeling scheme voluntarily, the government should step in with legislative enforcement.

Public health measures for infectious diseases illustrate the difficulty of introducing interventions without the

consent of those affected. Compulsory quarantine and isolation are considered to be among the most intrusive public health measures. The Council suggests that these might be acceptable where the costs, such as imposing such restrictions without consent, are outweighed by the prevention of significant harm to others.

Both adding and not adding fluoride to the water supply could disadvantage some groups of people, either through limiting personal choice or through preventing possible health benefits. The need for

fluoridation varies from region to region, and the Council recommends that the most appropriate way of deciding whether fluoride should be added to water supplies is through democratic decision-making procedures. [www](http://www.nuffieldfoundation.org)



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The report uses case studies to illustrate the different dilemmas faced by policy makers when deciding which measures would be most effective and acceptable.

Welcome to the Nuffield Foundation Newsletter which highlights our current areas of grant making and focuses on the outcomes of the projects we fund.

Further details on all the stories marked with this icon [www](http://www.nuffieldfoundation.org) can be found on our website.

The Newsletter is published three times a year and you can obtain further copies or ask to be put on the mailing list by contacting the Foundation. If you have any comments on the Newsletter we would be delighted to hear from you.

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Skills across Europe

The vocational education and training (VET) qualification systems differ from country to country within the European Union.

A grant from the Foundation to Dr Winch, King's College London and Professor Clarke, University of Westminster, is supporting an analysis of how key concepts such as skills, training and competence, are understood and applied within the different national contexts. Interim findings are available from the King's College website.

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Science Education: a European perspective

Science education, and particularly the declining numbers of young people choosing to pursue the study of science in Europe, has recently been the focus of considerable attention. *Science Education in Europe* reports on the findings of two Nuffield funded London seminars which drew together a group of leading science educators from across Europe. The report highlights the major issues confronting formal secondary science education, identifies similarities and differences between countries, and makes a series of recommendations for improvement in key areas. www



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Building Africa's science capacity

The Commission for Africa's 2005 report highlighted the importance of strengthening Africa's science capacity. Nuffield's Commonwealth Programme is funding several initiatives that respond to this call. Two build on scientific collaboration between the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine and institutions in Africa. The first, a partnership with the South African Cochrane Centre, is increasing the numbers of people from sub-Saharan Africa participating in the Cochrane Collaboration. The second, working with the College of Medicine at the University of Malawi, is training African respiratory health professionals in research methods. Nuffield has also begun collaborating with European foundations to launch a joint programme to develop African research in neglected communicable diseases. www



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International Fellowships

The main phase of the International Fellowships Program on Children of Immigrants in Schools, jointly funded with the US National Science Foundation, is now complete. Following fieldwork in the US, the six Nuffield post-doctoral Fellows are back in their home universities - Amsterdam, Barcelona, Gothenburg, Oxford, Paris - writing up data and producing preliminary papers.

After a year at Harvard, Vikki Boliver has rejoined her UK project senior researcher, Anthony Heath, at Oxford. Using quantitative datasets, she is exploring how both the socio-economic and racial composition of schools influence educational trajectories. Her preliminary findings reveal very similar patterns in the two countries, with the children of immigrants systematically underplaced in higher education relative to their academic abilities and achievements; school composition affects educational outcomes in essentially the same way in the two countries, irrespective of the differences in their education systems. www



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Science opens doors

When David Bendell from Bexhill College took a Nuffield Science Bursary at Kent and Sussex Hospital for 5 weeks in 2005, little did he know the doors it would open.

His project, *"A Study Into The Possibility Of Bacterial Cross Contamination In Food And Drink Distribution"* won a Gold BA CREST award and he was subsequently chosen to represent the UK at the European Union Contest for Young Scientists in Stockholm. Recently he also shared his bursary experiences with educationalists and health professionals meeting to discuss the enhancement of school science through the use of "health" applications and contexts. [www](http://www.nuffieldfoundation.org)



"Helping to promote the amazing opportunities the scheme provides for students has been an exciting, rewarding and immensely valuable experience." (David Bendell)

FROM THE ARCHIVE: TIME IS

In 1959 Professor Stephen Toulmin and Dr June Goodfield approached the Nuffield Foundation with a proposal for a revolutionary series of educational films to "...awake interest and stimulation in the history of scientific ideas.." and bridge the divide between science and the humanities. The pilot film was a success, and Trustees agreed to fund a 'Unit for the History of Ideas' which would produce textbooks and films under the title 'The Ancestry of Science'. Although the Unit was unable to find a permanent base, five films were produced. The British Film Institute retain archive copies of these, including 'Time Is' which is featured in the recently published BFI Screen Guide '100 Best Documentary Films.' [www](http://www.bfi.org.uk)

(BFI/Patrick Russell/ISBN/EAN: 9781844574956)

Applied Science – a welcome challenge

The Nuffield Curriculum Centre and the consultancy 4science recently collaborated with the Nuffield 14 -19 Review to discuss ways of supporting and improving the GCE A level Applied Science course.

This qualification is being introduced by schools and colleges in response to the success of the new GCSE Applied Science courses, such as that included in the Nuffield - supported 'Twenty First Century Science programme'. These courses are proving successful in motivating students to continue with science post-16. With 'C21' now in over 900 schools, the number of such students is expected to rise dramatically over the next few years.

To meet increased demand for teaching and learning resources and training revealed by these developments, the Curriculum Centre and 4science are also working with three Science Learning Centres to create support networks of GCE Applied Science teachers and improve

Hitchin Girls' School students use flame test on a standard procedure to identify unknown compounds



support materials. This project is supported by the Institute of Physics, the Gatsby Charitable Foundation and the Wellcome Trust. [www](http://www.nuffieldfoundation.org)



Information on all these stories can be found at www.nuffieldfoundation.org



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Pensions for all?

State and private pensions in the UK are undergoing significant reform. The Government is likely to decide by mid-2008 on the policies that will set the pensions framework for the foreseeable future. These decisions will have a real impact on the retirement incomes for future generations of pensioners.

Nuffield has been funding seminars by the Pensions

Policy Institute which provide an independent forum for discussion on pensions reform by Government, financial providers and consumer groups. The 2007 seminar series covers aspects of the design of "personal accounts", the plan to enrol people automatically into a personal pension plan with employer contributions. [www](http://www.pensionspolicyinstitute.org.uk)



Ms Fran Bennett

ENEF Chair

In November Anne Sofer steps down as Chair of the Elizabeth Nuffield Educational Fund Committee. The new Chair, Fran Bennett, is a half-time senior research fellow in the Department of Social Policy and Social Work, University of Oxford, where her main areas of interest are poverty, gender and social security issues. [www](http://www.nuffield.org)

Language Prize

The Mary Glasgow Language Trust's new 14-19 Curriculum Prize (funded by the Nuffield) has been won by Sheffield LEA's Vocational International Project. The VIP brings local businesses and schools together to show young people why languages are important and is encouraging more youngsters in Sheffield and other areas to continue to learn a language after the age of 14.

The closing date for the 2008 Prize(s) is 15 February 2008. [www](http://www.maryglasgowlanguageprize.org)

The forensic use of DNA: ethical issues examined

DNA profiling is an increasingly valuable tool for detecting and prosecuting offenders, but more safeguards are needed to protect the liberty and privacy of the innocent, says the Nuffield Council on Bioethics in a recent report.

The Council recommends that the police should only be allowed to keep the DNA of people who are convicted of a crime, with the exception of people charged with serious violent or sexual offences. Currently, the police can permanently store DNA taken from

people who have been arrested even if they are later found to be innocent. The proposed changes would bring the law in England, Wales and Northern Ireland into line with that in Scotland.

"Innocent people are concerned about how their DNA might be used in future if it is kept on the National DNA Database without



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their consent," said Professor Sir Bob Hepple QC, Chairman of the Council. "We would like to see the police instead put more resources into the collection of DNA from crime scenes." At present, fewer than 20 percent of crime scenes are forensically examined. [www](http://www.ncob.org.uk)



William Morris, Lord Nuffield
1877-1963

The Nuffield Foundation is an endowed charitable trust established in 1943 by William Morris (Lord Nuffield) the founder of Morris Motors with the aim of advancing social well being. We fund research and practical experiment and the development of capacity to undertake them, working across education, science, social science and social policy. While most of the Foundation's expenditure is on responsive grant programmes we also undertake our own initiatives.

Full information on all our current activities and on how to apply for grants can be found at www.nuffieldfoundation.org

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