Article title: Preventing Unintentional Injuries: Ethical Considerations in Public Health

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Abstract: Injury, the origin of which means injustice, is a global health problem imposing a disproportionately high burden on people in fragile economies. This chapter examines the ethical implications of public health actions to prevent unintentional injuries, whose distinction from violence can undermine an integrated preventive approach. Viewing non-intended injuries as results from accidents fosters reluctance to apply principles of justice to them and supports risk acceptance and non-intervention. The concepts of social justice and autonomy are at the core of common debates about the roles of the state, communities and individuals in controlling injury. The chapter first critiques arguments relating to concepts such as responsibility, risk compensation, equity in access to the so-called normal opportunity range, personal freedom, health-promoting choices, collective health interests, and the avoidance of third party harm. This is followed by and exploration of how Nancy Kass’s ethics framework for public health could assist injury prevention.

Keywords: unintentional injuries, public health ethics, accident, responsibility, blame, prevention, social justice, social determinants of health, risk compensation, health-promoting choices