Implementation Research Ethics: an outline and defence

Angus Dawson

A Dawson
University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia
Contact: angus.dawson@sydney.edu.au

Most research ethics has focused on clinical trials but this is a poor model for public health research. This talk, building upon previous work, argues that much public health research involves the monitoring and evaluation of existing routine and emergency programmes and the ethical issues are therefore different. First, traditional issues discussed in research ethics such as consent and data sharing need to be approached in a different way because programmes will have other means of gaining legitimacy and justification than individual-level protections. Second, evaluation raises unique ethical issues relating to how programmes might be changed during their lifetime, due to real-time learning about how improvements for participants might be made. This talk outlines the relevant ethical issues relating to such implementation research and defends these activities from some possible objections.