



Human Rights and Public Health in the AIDS Pandemic

Lawrence O. Gostin, Zita Lazzarini

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A penetrating analysis of the close relationship between public health and human rights, this book makes a compelling case for synergy between the two fields. Using the AIDS pandemic as a lens, the authors demonstrate that health is closely related to human dignity and individual rights--human rights cannot be deemed adequate and comprehensive without ensuring the health of individuals. In the course of their analysis, Gostin and Lazzarini tackle some of the most vexing issues of our time, including the universality of human rights and the counter-claims of cultural relativity. Taking a cue from environmental impact assessment, they propose a human rights impact assessment for examining health policies--a tool that will be invaluable for evaluating real-world public health problems.

This volume examines issues--HIV testing, screening, partner notification, isolation, quarantine, and criminalization of persons with HIV/AIDS--within the framework of international human rights law. The authors evaluate the public health implications of a wide range of AIDS policies in developed as well as developing countries. The role of women in society receives special emphasis. Finally, the book presents three case histories significant in the HIV/AIDS pandemic and analyzes them from a human rights perspective. The cases include discrimination and the transmission of HIV and tuberculosis in an occupational health care setting; breast feeding in the least developed countries; and confidentiality and the right of sexual partners to know of potential exposure to HIV. Gostin and Lazzarini have written a book that will be a valuable addition to the libraries of public health practitioners, legal scholars, bioethicists, policy makers, and public rights activists.

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