

# Navigating the ethical challenges of medication choices based on environmental impact

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### **Background**

The environmental impact of medicines is a critical issue for public and planetary health. However, considering environmental impacts when choosing treatments with medication can present complex ethical challenges.

### Key ethical challenges

- Weighing environmental considerations against other factors in medication choices.
- Deciding when it is desirable to share environmental considerations with stakeholders.

### Objective

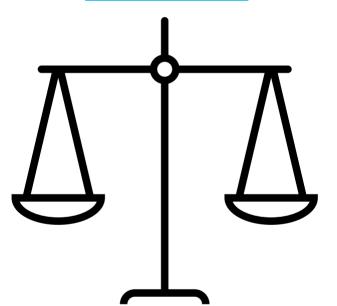
To analyse the ethical challenges for environmentally sustainable medication choices using established ethical principles

Do good to individual patients by choosing optimally safe and effective medications

Do no harm to individual patients by choosing optimally safe and effective medications

Avoid disproportionally risking the health of individual patients for the benefit of others

Avoid placing undue pressure on stakeholders to make environmentally sustainable medication choices Beneficence
Nonmaleficence
Justice
Respect for autonomy



Do good to all individuals by choosing medications with low environmental impact

Do no harm to all individuals by choosing medications with low environmental impact

Promote equitable health benefits for all populations by choosing medications with low environmental impact

Provide stakeholders with information on low environmental impact options to enable informed choices in line with personal values

# Conclusion

- Established biomedical ethical principles support the integration of environmental considerations into medication choices when appropriately aligned with individual values, which requires careful navigation on a case-by-case basis.
- To guide ethical decision making for environmentally sustainable medication choices, adequate policies are needed.

## Policy recommendations

- 1. Increase transparency regarding the environmental impact of medicines
- 2. Invest in research on the environmental impact of medicines and how this can be considered in clinical practice
- 3. Encourage collaboration between stakeholders to develop an understanding of all values and a shared responsibility
- 4. Develop clear guidelines on how to ethically consider the environmental impact in medication choices





