

**Symposium Description (250 words max.)**

**Symposium Lead (name and affiliation):** Professor Peter Littlejohns – Faculty of Life Sciences and Medicine, King's College London, UK.

**Rationale for Symposium:** A central challenge in any health system is the efficient and equitable distribution of scarce resources. There is growing emphasis on incorporating the views and values of 'the public' in decisions about the distribution of resources. This has proved challenging: genuine participation is time consuming and costly; there are questions about who should be involved, in what numbers; and there is the question of plurality and what to do when there is disagreement. Academic disciplines address plurality in different ways, placing different emphasis on good process versus good outcomes, and on key concepts such as coherence, consistency and consensus.

Researchers who are interested in public values (including in health priority setting) tend to proceed along one of two lines: aggregation (surveying large numbers and eliciting preferences, summing or aggregating to find resolution) or participatory deliberation (providing citizens with information and resources and facilitating reasoned exchanges with the aim of finding common ground and recommendations). Aggregation will tend to hide diversity and disagreement, there might be no clear majority and different types of aggregation might lead to different recommendations. Deliberation is typically resource intensive, which often means relatively small numbers of participants, raising issues of representation and legitimacy. This symposium will bring together different disciplinary perspectives on plurality in public values in relation to health priority setting. Relevant projects in the UK, New Zealand and Australia will be presented and a new research approach to assessing how plurality can be captured and used to inform policy and practice.

*Introduction* Professor Rachel Baker (Glasgow Caledonian University, Scotland, UK) and Professor Peter Littlejohns (King's College London, UK) will introduce the symposium, describe the conceptual background and outline the aims and objectives of the session (10 minutes)

*Presentation one*

Professor Paul Scuffham (Director of the Centre for Applied Health Economics, Griffith University, Australia) will describe a research programme in Australia that compared deliberative and health economic approaches to common health challenges (15 minutes). He will summarise a range of publications on the issue funded by the Australian Research Council Linkage Grant (#LP100200446)

*Presentation two*

Dr Emily Tumilty, Professor Tim Stokes (Department of General Practice and Rural Health, University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand) Professor Robin Gauld (School of Business, University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand) will describe a framework approach undertaken in New Zealand where the concept of an extended version of "accountability for reasonableness" was tested (15 minutes). This research project was funded by the Lottery Fund.

*Presentation three*

Professor Rachel Baker will present proposals for a new research programme in the UK that seeks to explore how plurality of public values can be harmonised to inform policy (15 minutes). This is in preparation for a Wellcome Trust Programme grant submission

*Discussion*

Professor Peter Littlejohns and Professor Rachel Baker will chair the closing discussion and identify a common way forward for an international research collaboration (20 minutes)