

the ethics of
"evidence based policy"

Delhi Evidence Week 2015

in ascending order of
my own concern

experiments deny treatments?

- Here is one place where the mis-analogy to evidence-based medicine really misleads
- Much writing in medical ethics assumes a well-equipped academic hospital where the default is maximally aggressive care
- The opposite of many medical trials is a different treatment; the opposite of many development economics experiments is doing nothing

much of the money goes to rich people

- Most of my family's income comes from BMGF, NIH, and other grants!
- Professors' salaries, **infra-marginal** summer support; conferences, travel
- About 20% for projects for poor people, in one recent case
- ... But plausibly worth it if evidence based policy happens

almost all researchers have an important conflict of interest

- ...and I don't mean the familiar financial ones.
- Not just about colorful, jargon free policy briefs... what questions are asked?
- Can I persuade that my result is interesting? Are the stars on the right coefficients?
- More important to have own novel trivia than to re-emphasize what matters most
- Choice of topics: what will journals like?

complicity in the
pretense that policy is,
in fact, evidence based.

... and that all important constraints on human development
are amenable to technocratic solution.