

## Unit 2 Topic 4.1 Page 140

### Activity: Discussion

#### The ethics of biological policies

##### Learning objective

At the end of this activity you should be able to:

- consider the ethics of policies associated with biological theories of criminality.
- A. Working in small groups, look back to pages 138-139 of your textbook at the following policies that are influenced by biological theories of criminality and note what is involved in each case:
- Antabuse
  - Methadone
  - chemical castration
  - surgical castration
  - lobotomy
  - compulsory sterilisation.
- B. As a whole class, discuss the view that 'policies linked to biological theories deprive people of their human rights'. During the discussion consider the following:
1. What rights should offenders have over their own bodies; e.g. sex offenders, violent schizophrenics, drug addicts who commit crime to pay for their addiction?
  2. Does society have a right to *force* offenders to undergo treatments such as surgery or administering of drug therapies? Which kinds of offenders would it *not* be acceptable to treat in this way? Where should we draw the line, and who should decide?
  3. Should society have a right to impose *preventative* treatments on someone *before* they have committed any crime, on the basis that science shows that they are biologically predisposed to criminality?
  4. What if the treatments have a risk of adverse side effects? What about wrongful convictions? Is it worth the risk, in order to protect future potential victims or society at large from serious criminals?