

*The Ethics and Publics of  
Sufficient Knowledge in  
Medical Practice*

**Julia Knopes, M.A.**

PhD Candidate, Anthropology

Program Coordinator and Instructor, Bioethics

Case Western Reserve University

# *What is Sufficient Knowledge?*

- o The process and product of making conscious decisions about what information to ignore or deemphasize in order to prioritize the most important and applicable pieces of knowledge
- o A phenomenon I identified through 14 months of ethnographic fieldwork at a medical school

# *Questions to Consider*

- When does conscious ignorance put patients in the way of medical harm?
- What types of circumstances increase the risk of mismatches between sufficient knowledge and care?
- How might the patient public respond if certain illnesses are deemphasized by physicians on the regional and national scales?
- How might physicians better communicate the limitations of their knowledge to patients?

*Thank you*

Contact me at:

Julia Knopes

[jcb193@case.edu](mailto:jcb193@case.edu)