



East Midlands Medical Sociology Group Event

Monday 11th May 2015, 12.30 pm – 4.00 pm
**Room 4.09 and 4.10 Edith Murphy House, De Montfort University,
Leicester.**

You are invited to attend an afternoon seminar organised by the East Midlands Medical Sociology Group and hosted by De Montfort University.

Event Abstracts

Keynote Speaker: Professor Joanna Latimer, Cardiff University
**'Repelling neoliberal world-making: ageing, dementia and
irresponsibility'**

In this paper I offer a perspective on body-world relations and care in the context of ageing, especially with regards to dementia. The paper represents a chapter in my new book, "At the Limits of Life", in which I am re-visioning ways to 'be alongside' and dwell with ageing and being old. This re-visioning does not preclude finding ways to cure, prevent or alleviate those diseases that seem to be particularly associated with growing older, but puts them under erasure to emphasise the need to resist waging a war on ageing, especially on dementia, and instead understand how ageing affects and threatens the modes of ordering that underpin contemporary capitalism. Specifically, I consider why contemporary late modern societies care so much about and yet fear growing old, perhaps even more than death, but also find it so hard to care about and look after the aged, including making ageing and the aged targets to be managed. Here, I suggest that something may occur in which dementia and even becoming old involves a form of repellence - what elsewhere I have called irresponsibility - those moments and occasions in which the older person seems to be refusing and repelling others and the worlds they make together. In this inversion of the usual ways of theorizing the relation between the aged and the world, in which it is thought that it is the older person who becomes monstrous and repellent, I argue it is the older person, for example with dementia, who is repelled, and the environment in which they find themselves that can become monstrous. I then go on to re-vision ageing and emphasise the importance of being alongside the aged as a new perspective on care and late modern capitalism that 'others' those who are no longer responsible.

Oliver Williams, University of Leicester
**'Health Inequalities, New Public Health and Area-Based Initiatives:
Redressing Ecological Disparities or Placing Blame?'**

Historically, public health has looked towards social and environmental explanations for the occurrence of illness and disease but increasingly new public health shifts attention to how individuals 'choose' to behave. Despite the current trend towards moral individualism, area-based initiatives (ABIs) have been popularly used by neoliberal governments to address social and ecological inequalities. In market-driven societies there is a longstanding 'inverse care law': health resources tend to be less readily available to those most in need. By highlighting the significance of structural inequalities, ABIs

appear to acknowledge the problematic nature of approaching social issues as matters of individual moral responsibility alone. However, they also continue to draw heavily on the discourse of individualism which readily blames the victim.

ABIs are particularly susceptible to the wider health policy trend known as 'lifestyle drift': whereby policies aimed at addressing structural inequalities tend, over time, to adopt a behavioural approach. This paper draws from data collected during sixteen months of ethnography, involving observation, interviews with staff and participants and analysis of documents, in a deprived English neighbourhood where ABIs have promoted active-lifestyles and significantly increased local physical activity opportunities. The analysis shows that over time the relevance of initially identified barriers to participation experienced by local residents were largely ignored and institutional responsibility became contested. These findings inform an evaluation of the strategy of delivering ABIs in a market-driven, neoliberal society. Conclusions are drawn as to how research-based interventions could increase the robustness of future policies aiming to address health inequalities.

Caroline Morris, University of Leicester
'The Practice of Cardiovascular Risk Assessment in Primary Care'

Screening for individuals 'at risk' of cardiovascular disease has become a core strategy for cardiovascular prevention. However, there is limited evidence that risk assessment of the asymptomatic population improves health outcomes. Additionally, a modern medicalisation critique argues that it may result in more harm than good for many individuals through the negative effects of labelling normality as 'sickness'; consequential treatment to modify risk-factors favours medication with its associated side effects and disutility. Using interviews and observation, I will look at how risk assessment is practiced, and how individuals make sense of their 'at risk' status. I argue that being identified as 'at risk' has become a diagnosis, thus extending the perimeters of preventative medicine, and changing the nature of diagnosis itself. Being 'at risk' is exposed as an uncertain space with both public health and medicalisation discourses appealing to competing, but often hazily constructed ideas of patient autonomy and vulnerability. I will be considering the implications for care and how general practice can most effectively support individuals as they negotiate the complexities of screening, and attempt to modify their risk in a way which does more good than harm.

Cost of attendance:

A light lunch and refreshments will be provided and there will be the opportunity for networking and discussion. To cover our costs and to enable us to hold future events the following charges will be applied:

BSA members £5; Non BSA members £10.

No charge for postgraduate researchers who are concessionary members of the BSA; non-member post graduate registration will be £5.

Booking your place:

Booking is essential. Venue numbers are restricted and it is advisable to book early. Book your place here:

<http://portal.britsoc.co.uk/public/event/eventBooking.aspx?id=EVT10421>

Full joining instructions will be circulated to delegates prior to the event. For academic enquiries please contact nudson@dmu.ac.uk. For administration and conference enquiries please contact events@britsoc.org.uk