

**Centre for Reproduction Research Seminar Series**

**Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> November, 12 – 1.30, Edith Murphy House, Room 2.10, De Montfort University,  
Leicester, UK**

**Dr Charlotte Jones, University of Exeter**

**"Looking Backwards Whilst Looking Forwards: Variations of Sex Characteristics,  
Temporality and Reproductive Justice"**

As places are limited, please email [CRR@dmu.ac.uk](mailto:CRR@dmu.ac.uk) if you wish to attend to secure your place.

**Abstract**

Whilst our lives and bodies frequently trouble ideals of predictability, linearity and continuity, common conceptualisations of reproductive issues are nevertheless shaped by perceptions of embodied ‘timeliness’, or synchronicity, and normative development. This paper develops work on the medical treatment of people with variations of sex characteristics (VSCs) – which raises necessary questions about autonomy, support and temporality – by considering the significant role (in)fertility and reproductive justice issues play in the experiences and identities of many people with VSCs.

Although infertility is often recognised as a status that is medically identified in adulthood after unsuccessful attempts to conceive, I show the importance of considering the context and timing of an infertility diagnosis which is acquired at the same time as the identification of a VSC, where the inability to conceive without assistance is positioned as ‘a symptom’ of the sex variation and subsumed within this. In some cases, this may first arise in infancy, childhood or adolescence; before or outside of attempts to conceive; and without necessarily undergoing fertility treatment. Drawing on reflective diaries and in-depth interviews, I show how some childhood and adolescent imaginaries of the future are mapped out and re-drawn according to a revelation of infertility, and identities and broader configurations of future and past selves are constructed around this knowledge. This paper will also provide a preliminary discussion of new engaged research in its initial stages, and explore iterative and retrospective processes of research design.

**Speaker biography**

Charlotte Jones is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Wellcome Centre for Cultures and Environments of Health at the University of Exeter. Her main research interests lie in gender, sexuality, disability and health, and particularly the intersections of these areas. In 2016, she completed her PhD at the University of Sheffield on medical and social conceptualisations of intersex/variations of sex characteristics in the UK. Her current research focuses on the fertility and reproductive concerns of people with variations of sex characteristics.