

Group Name: BSA Medical Sociology Group (Main)

2010-2011

1. *Established*

The main Medical Sociology Group was established in 1968 and the MedSoc Group held its first Annual Conference in York in 1969.

2. *Current membership figure:*

We have no formal membership, but normally about half the people attending our annual conference are BSA members. This year in Durham a total of 259 delegates attended the conference, of whom 215 were UK-based and 34 were non-UK based. Ten UK subsidized places were taken up.

3. *Study Group Expenditure and Study Group Income*

The financial position of the group continues to go from strength to strength mainly attributable to the generous £22,000 donated by the SHI Foundation and the continued success of the annual conference. Income for the year was £107,398 and expenditure was £69,085 leaving overall reserves for the financial year (30th September 2010) at £201,286.

4. *Aims of the Study Group*

The objects of the group are to foster the development of teaching and research in the sociology of health and illness and communication between persons interested in these areas. In pursuit of these aims the group will organise an annual conference, encourage and support the establishment of regional groups, publicise its activities through Medical Sociology online (MSO) and other media outlets and undertake such other activities to promote these objects, provided that these activities are legal and legally charitable.

5. *Review of the year*

The 2010 Conference

The 42nd Medical Sociology Annual conference was held at Durham University from 1st to 3rd September. The programme comprised of 160 oral presentations, 14 posters, two plenary sessions, two symposia, and a publishing workshop. The publishing company Sage was kind enough to continue its funding of a special prize for the best paper at the conference.

The conference opened and closed with two plenaries from Anne Rogers, professor of the sociology of health care at the University of Manchester, and Carl May, newly appointed professor of health care innovation at the University of Southampton. Professor Rogers' presentation—on the increasing prominence of the 'patient perspective' in health policy discourse, and the consequences of this for health care provision and for academic sociologists—provoked a lively discussion about the successes and failures of medical sociological thinking in influencing policy. Professor May's closing plenary was, in his own words, "part futurology, part review of our research at Newcastle since 2001," and offered an entertaining but informative perspective on the consequences of technological developments in health-care delivery for clinician-patient interactions, relationships and identities.

Building on their previous success in providing an opportunity for speakers and participants to engage in greater depth with a particular topic or theme, we held two specialist symposia during the conference. A third unfortunately needed to be cancelled at late notice due to

illness of one of the key participants. Among the symposia which did take place was a special 'Conveners' symposium', which this year focused on the recently released Marmot report on health inequalities. We intend to hold further conveners' symposia in future years.

Parallel paper streams were refreshed for 2010, with new streams on areas including 'Preventive health care', 'Randomised controlled trials and evidence-based medicine', 'Embodiment and emotion' and various aspects of health throughout the lifecourse added to popular stalwarts such as 'Inequalities', 'Theory' and 'Gender'. Delegates were also able to view a wide variety of research posters, attend workshops on publishing, the sociology of alcohol use and the sociology curriculum in medical education, and relax at numerous drinks and nibbles receptions.

Prizes

The winner of the 2010 SHI Book prize was Marsha Ronsengarten's *HIV Interventions* (University of Washington Press), and the winner of the Phil Strong Memorial Prize of £1200 towards postgraduate study was Rampaul Chamba, for his study exploring Bio-medical and social explanations for schizophrenia among black African-Caribbean people. The winner of the poster prize was Deborah Davidson, for 'Written in the flesh: Embodied grief and memorialisation with tattoos'.

The Medical Sociology Group Committee

This year we bade farewell to Richard Compton, Susie Scott and Cate Heeney as full committee members, and welcomed Ewen Speed, Julia Hiscock and Jude Robinson. Catherine Will succeeded Richard Compton as co-convenor, with Graham Martin.

Once again the MedSoc Group Committee would like to thank the Sociology of Health & Illness Foundation (FSHI) for the generous funding which has continued to play a vital role in maintaining the Group's healthy financial status despite the recent period of general financial stress.

6. Key activities during 2011

The committee began preparing for the 43rd Annual Medical Sociology Conference many months ago and is looking forward to holding it at the University of Chester in September 2011. Plenary speakers will be Alan Petersen and Rose Barbour. The committee has also instigated a process for making use of its surplus in an effective and managed way. Thanks to recent conference successes and the contributions from the FSHI, the surplus of the group has grown. A subcommittee of the main Medical Sociology Group committee has therefore begun to look at ways in which some of these funds might be disbursed, in a manner which effectively meets the aims of the Group while avoiding unsustainable commitments and retaining financial security.

7. Co-convener names:

Graham Martin and Catherine Will

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9. Study Group Website link

The main BSA Medical Sociology web page is <http://www.britsoc.co.uk/medsoc/>.