

BSA Environment and Health (MedSoc Special Interest Group)

Convenors' Report, February 2017

1. Aims of the Group

The aims of the Environment and Health SIG are:

- To foster sociological exploration of the conflicts and congruities between human health and the global environment.
- To provide a forum to consider how we may engage with academic research on environment and health, and with non-academic events, including the International Climate Change Treaty signing and the 2015 General Election.
- To plan contributions to future BSA annual and medical sociology conferences, regional BSA meetings and free-standing events, and to collaborate with other relevant BSA study groups (e.g. Climate Change study group, Animal/Human study group).

2. Membership

As at 6 February 2017, there are 58 registered members of the Group. This is an increase of 27 from the 31 members a year ago.

3. Convenors

Nick Fox and Richard Compton were joined in November 2016 by Sara McBride-Stewart (University of Cardiff) as the third member of the convenor team.

4. Activities

Inaugural one-day conference: 19 February 2016

The conference was organised in collaboration with the BSA Climate Change study group and the London MedSoc regional study group. It was held at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, and attracted 50 delegates including PGR students and a group of MSc students and their teachers from Brunel University. The keynote speaker was Professor Hilary Graham CBE (University of York) who spoke on the topic: 'Environmental change and human health: do people care about future generations?' This research explored people's attitudes to environmental initiatives that benefit future generations. Her research found support for policies that benefitted the next generations, even if there is little or no benefit in the future. This suggests governments should be more willing to develop long-term environmental policies.

The keynote was followed by a full day of papers (eight in all) and ended by discussing future work, not only in reporting research but also in influencing policy and activism.

The full programme is appended to this report.

We wish to thank all those who helped organise what was a very successful conference, and in particular Oliver Bonnington and the staff and student helpers from the LSHTM.

Special Section in journal Public Health

Following the conference Nick was approached by this peer-reviewed journal with the request that we submit papers for a special section on sociology, environment and health. After further discussions with the editor, three original research papers were submitted to the journal, and following peer-review were accepted for publication. Nick was invited to write an editorial introducing the papers. The special section was published in the December 2016 issue of the journal

[http://www.publichealthjrnl.com/issue/S0033-3506\(16\)X0011-X](http://www.publichealthjrnl.com/issue/S0033-3506(16)X0011-X)

Symposium at MedSoc conference 2016

A symposium on the topic '*Environment and health: Sociological Interactions*' was organised at the Medical Sociology conference, Aston University, September 2016. The symposium comprised versions of the three papers submitted to *Public Health* (see above):

Hilary Graham and Piran White: *Researching environmental and health behaviours*.

Sara McBride-Stewart: *The problem of realising the health benefits of natural space for gender*.

Nick Fox and Pam Alldred: *Sustainability as ecological potential*.

Chair: Richard Compton.

4. Future Activities

The group is now in the process of organising the *Second BSA Conference on Environment and Health*, again in conjunction with the BSA Climate Change group. This will be held at the University of Cardiff on 27 October 2017 with Ben Wheeler (University of Exeter) as keynote speaker.

We will use this event to continue to build the group and to sustain and deepen our links with the Climate Change group and with interdisciplinary social scientists in public health, public policy, development and environmental studies. We will promote the conference and the group widely nationally and internationally through our networks.

Nick J Fox, Richard Compton, Sara McBride-Stewart

Feb 2017

Attached: conference programme for Environment and health conference , Feb 2016.