

**BRITISH SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION MEDICAL SOCIOLOGY GROUP**  
**Annual General Meeting**  
**Minutes of the General Meeting**  
**Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> September 2013, 12:45 – 13:45**  
**Student Union Bar, Vanbrugh College, University of York**

Fifty six members of the BSA Medical Sociological Group attended the meeting. It was chaired by co-convenor Kate Weiner and supported by Helen Eborall also co-convenor. Elaine Forester was responsible for minute taking.

**1. Minutes of the 2012 AGM**

The minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> September 2012 were agreed to be accurate and correct.

**2. Matters Arising** - None at the 2013 AGM

**3. Convenor's Report** - This report was delivered by Kate Weiner.

There has been an overwhelming interest in the 2013 MedSoc conference resulting in closing bookings six weeks earlier than the deadline. The conference has grown again for the fourth year running, and this year is the largest to date. There were 259 delegates in 2010, 305 in 2011, 334 in 2012 and 362 in 2013.

The 45<sup>th</sup> Medical Sociology Conference received 424 abstracts, 222 were offered oral presentation slots, with 50 posters and 33 on the reserve list. Twenty nine papers were withdrawn prior to the programme being published (most of these slots were filled with papers on the reserve list) and 4 papers were withdrawn after printing. There were also a number of symposia and special events including two MedSoc Committee events: 'Architecture, Embodiment and Healthcare' (organised by Sarah Nettleton) and 'Cost of Living' (organised by Ewen Speed & Simon Carter), and two 'Author-Meets-Critics' sessions with Roberto Obadie and Nelly Oudshoorn. As noted above, there continues to be an increase in the number of delegates attending the conference with 365 delegates confirmed to attend this year, 309 for the full conference and 44 as day delegates. The committee increased the number of funded places again this year with 22 allocated to Postgraduate Students, 5 to unwaged and 5 to sociologists outside academia. There continues to be a healthy international interest in the conference with 19.5% of delegates attending the 2013 conference coming from overseas.

Report from the 'Medicine, health and illness stream' at the **BSA Annual Conference** April 2013: 48 papers were submitted to the stream, 34 were offered oral slots and 9 were offered a 'roundtable discussion' slot. The committee would like to thank Robert Dingwall for his stream plenary: "The Sick Role in a Consumer Society". As 2013 is the last year Chris Yuill will be Stream convenor the MedSoc committee would like to thank him for all of the work undertaken to ensure the success of the Medicine Health and Illness Stream and for helping to promote Medical Sociology. Catherine Will (ex-MedSoc co-convenor) and Sally Brown (ex-MedSoc committee member) will replace Chris for the 2014 conference. The abstract submission deadline is 18<sup>th</sup> October 2013.

**Regional / Special Interest Groups** – Two new groups have been created since the 2012 AGM: the Yorkshire regional medical sociology group and the 'Applied Qualitative Health Research' Group. Other active regional groups are London, North and East Midlands, North West, North East, South West, Wales and West Midlands. All regional groups are self-sustaining but can draw on a fund of money which will remain at £400 per group for 2013/2014 to help support their activities (which was increased from £200 per year in 2010).

**Early Career Researchers' (ECR) Event** – Following the first successful ECR day at the 2012 MedSoc conference, the second event has taken place at the 45<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference with over 54 attendees. The MedSoc committee would like to thank the organising committee John Gardener and Laura Knight (the first elected PGRS representatives on the MedSoc committee) for the work they have undertaken to make this a very successful and well attended event. This event was fully supported by the committee in the form of accommodation and reduced registration fees to all attending. To ensure continuity of the PGRS work, Laura Knight will remain on the committee for the 2013-14 year, with a new PGRS member elected during the AGM. .

**Further MedSoc Activities (in the 2012-13 year)** include:

- 1) The committee continued to provide funding to support the current MSO editorial team
- 2) The committee continued to provide funding to support the 'Cost of Living' blog
- 3) The jointly funded SocSocMed & MedSoc event: A celebration of Sally Macintyre's contribution to health inequalities research and policy, London, June 2013. The MedSoc committee offered funding to 10 PGRS/ECR (BSA members) to attend the event.
- 4) The increased number of funded places to attend the MedSoc annual conference from 28 in 2012 to 32 in 2013
- 5) A 'mentoring corner' is being trialled at the 2013 conference. The committee would like to thank Rose Barbour for kindly offering to give up her time for this. The committee would like to encourage volunteer mentors for future conferences.
- 6) Early discussions have been held about creating a sub-committee to focus on teaching of medical sociology.
- 7) Communication Strategy: there will be a new BSA website launched in 2014. The MedSoc group will have a microsite within this. The MedSoc microsite will bring together all communication relating to MedSoc activities incorporating: the MSN/MSo archive; the most successful features from MSo (PhD abstracts, conference reports, etc.); additional relevant news items and reports; a link to the Cost of Living blog; and possibly a link to the MEDSOCNEWS JISMAIL news feed. The MedSoc committee will continue to fund MSo for its final year in 2013 (£7,280 per annum). The committee, together with the current MSO editorial team, plan to include a celebratory event in the 2014 conference to launch the MSO archive and the new micro site.

#### **4. Constitution**

There is one constitutional change proposed

##### **Change from:**

The Group shall be called the Medical Sociology Study Group. The objects of the group shall be 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.

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\*The reason for this change is to make the constitution less restrictive in terms of current and future communications, i.e. to allow us to respond to most relevant channels of communication as and when they arise without constitutional change

This proposal was opened up to those attending the AGM for discussion and any questions. As there were no comments or questions relating to the proposed changes a vote was taken and the change was approved by all members of the BSA attending the AGM.

#### **5. Financial Report – Kate Weiner presented the financial report**

At the end of the financial year (30<sup>th</sup> September 2012) the BSA audited accounts shows a credit balance on the MedSoc account of £183,296 compared with £189,458 in 2011. The funds were utilised in the year so that reserves decreased in line with planned expenditure. The reduction in fees

by £25 per member delegate introduced in 2011 again applied in 2013 due to the healthy MedSoc reserves. Based on current forecast figures for this year's conference at the University of York, it is anticipated a planned deficit of just over £18,000 will be generated (based on 362 delegates), compared to a £4,000 surplus from last year's conference. This deficit has been planned to spend down the surplus fund and has been undertaken by the following measures: 1) maintaining reduced fees for BSA members, 2) funding 32 free places for the conference, 3) supporting the early career researcher event (estimated at £4,481 for 2013), 4) funding the Cost of Living blog and MSo, 5) supporting the regional and special interest groups. Based upon the forecasted deficit for the 2013 conference, the closing balance for 2013 should be about £157,932.

Similar spending (in terms of activities) is planned for the 2013-14 year. All the planned spend down measures are fully reversible and if not financially sustainable can easily be removed from the group's yearly activities.

## **6. Election Results**

### **a) SHI Editorial Board**

There were 5 nominations for the one vacancy on the editorial board. The full list of nomination has been displayed on the notice board at the registration desk. The online nomination processes had also been published on the conference booking confirmation generated by the BSA office and distributed via the MedSoc JISC mail.

After a count of votes Sara Shaw was elected to the Editorial Board.

### **b) Medical Sociology Group**

There were 4 ordinary member vacancies for the MedSoc committee and 1 PGRS member 8 nominations were received for ordinary committee membership and 3 for the PGRS member

After a count of votes Annika Baddeley, Catriona Rooke, Fiona Stevenson and Paul Whybrow were elected to the main committee and Tim Bank as the PGRS representative.

## **7. Phil Strong Memorial Prize**

Jude Robinson reported that this year the Phil Strong Memorial Prize had received two applicants and both were eligible: Agnes Adama Campbell Nee Kallay, University of Sussex, and Jeremy Booth, University of York. In line with the current conditions of the prize, a draw for the winner was undertaken and Jeremy Booth was announced as the winner of the £1,200 prize.

## **8. Foundation for the Sociology of Health and Illness**

The Trustees' Report was presented by Mary Boulton  
**SHI Foundation Programme of Awards**

### **1. The following new awards were made in 2012-13:**

#### **(a) Post Graduate International Conference Travel Grant**

There were 13 applications for international conference travel grants in 2012-13, down from 14 in 2011-12. Seven awards were made, up from 5 in 2011-12.

#### **(b) Mildred Blaxter Post-Doctoral Fellowships.**

There were 6 applications in 2012-13; this award was not offered in 2011-12. One award was made.

#### **(c) Symposia & Workshops Support Awards.**

There were 9 applications for Symposia and Workshop Support grants in 2012-13, down from 12 applications made in 2011-12. Three awards were made, down from 5 in 2011-12.

#### **(d) Research Grant Development Awards.**

There were 2 applications for the Research Grant Development Award, down from 4 in 2011-12, possibly because only one competition was held in 2012-13. As in 2011-12, one award was made.

### **2. Proposed schedule of awards to be made in 2013-14:**

It is proposed to make the following awards over the course of the next financial year, though this may be varied according to the funds available and the quality of the applications received:

- 5 Post Graduate International Conference Travel grants @ £600
  - 5 Post Graduate International Conference Travel grants to attend ISA conference, Japan @ £900
  - 2 Mildred Blaxter Post-Doctoral Fellowships (to achieve 3 awards every 2 years)
  - 4 Research Grant Development awards
  - 5 Symposium or Workshop awards
- Further details can be found on the Foundation's website at <http://www.shifoundation.org.uk/>

## **9. Sociology of Health and Illness – Editor's Report**

The Editor's Report was presented by Gareth Williams.

Gareth Williams, Eva Elliott, Davina Allen, Ian Rees Jones, and Joanna Latimer (all from the University of Cardiff), and David Hughes (Swansea University) have taken over from the previous editorial board.

The aim for the new editorial board has been to maintain its already high standards set by the previous board and continue to receive over 500 submissions / re-submissions per year with an accepted rate for 20%. Due to the high quality of papers submitted there are no planned policy changes. The aim for the new board will be to strengthen the online presence through both Twitter and a reciprocal link with the Cost of Living Blog. It will continue to publish virtual special issues and commission review articles to be distributed to the MedSoc community.

Gareth expressed his thanks to all referees.

One question was raised at the end of Gareth's report regarding Open Access. As there is a great deal of uncertainty and an unclear scene of the impact that Open Access will have going forward, the outcome remains unclear.

## **10. Medical Sociology Online (MSO)**

Editor in Chief Report was presented by Jackie Watts

Since July 2011 the editorship of MSo has been held by a team from the Faculty of Health and Social Care of the Open University led by Dr Jackie Watts. Now in its final year of a three year term of editorial office at the Open University the MSo team will be concentrating on the compiling of the MSN & MSO archive with a completion date of January 2014. There will be three more issues, October 2013, Feb and June 2014.

## **11. Cost of Living Blog - 1st ANNUAL REPORT MEDSOC AGM**

From the launch date of 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2012 the site has received 19,776 visits from 11,653 unique visitors. This volume of traffic has generated 36,927 page views across all 5 continents. These figures demonstrate the reach and breadth of exposure the blog has secured and reflects core elements of the MedSoc group remit regarding public engagement with sociology, particularly the requirement to foster the development of teaching and research in the sociology of health and illness and communication between persons interested in these areas.

The post with the most hits is Simon Carter's post: 'Fashion, Male Beauty and the 'Men's Dress Reform Party''. This post was picked up by a number of prominent blogs in the States and this has drawn over 2000 viewers to the page. This is followed by Graham Scambler's consideration of the Great British Class Survey, followed by the Scambler family's post on action sociology. The blog has a google page rank of 5. This page ranking has been accomplished through a concerted social media campaign, across twitter and Facebook, as well as links with the SHI journal site, various other blogs (exposure across the Dish, politics.co.uk, society central, gawker, charisma, guerrilla policy, socialist health association, etc.).

On-going costs are minimal, and the main financial outlay is to cover travel costs for quarterly editorial meetings and a maintenance contract to ensure on-going IT support for the blog. In terms of developments, the initial frequency of posts was two per week and the editorial team maintained this for period September 2012 to December 2012. After review in December it was decided to downscale

publication to one per week. This has made securing content for the blog much more sustainable. The editors also introduced a rota system whereby the frequency of blog posts is rotated across the editorial group. In terms of future developments the editors would like to receive more posts from people outside the editorial group. There has been a growing number of 'external' posters and the editorial group are keen to develop this further. There have been some preliminary discussions with the SHI editorial staff about possible collaborations in terms of content across SHI and CoL. There has also been engagement (through John Holmwood at BSA) with the Sociology Teachers' email list. The team is keen to explore ways in which public engagement with the blog can be increased. The spend to date is £2956. This was an underspend of £744 on the projected budget for period Sept 2013-Sept 2013. Main cost was on site design and maintenance. Agreed budget for period 2013-2014 is £1950. This is to cover ongoing maintenance/web support (£1200) and travel costs for editorial meetings (£750).

## **12. Any other business**

As Kate Weiner is stepping down as co-convenor the whole committee would like to thank her for all of the hard work she has undertaken in her two years as co-convenor. Jude Robinson will take over from Kate alongside Helen Eborall.

Catherine Will, Shirlene Badger, Sally Brown and John Gardener are also stepping down from the committee and all of the committee would like to thank them for work undertaken and wish them luck for the future.

The next Annual General Meeting will be held at Aston University, Birmingham during the 46<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference on Thursday 11th September 2014

The minutes of the 2013 AGM will be printed into the programme of the 2014 conference.