

BSA Yorkshire Medical Sociology Group Annual Report

The British Sociological Association's Yorkshire Medical Sociology Group continues to meet throughout 2016. To this end we held two meetings the first was hosted by the School of Health and Related Research at the University of Sheffield and convened by Prof Paul Bissell on the subject of "Public Health, Inequality and Neo-Liberalism" on Wednesday 9th March 2016, 12:30 – 16:30. The meeting was focused around a panel discussion led by Prof Ted Schrecker (Durham University) and Dr Marion Peacock (University of Lancaster). Prof Chick Collins (University of West of Scotland) had been invited but due to unforeseen circumstances could not join us on this occasion. Each of the discussants gave a short presentation before we had a panel discussion.

After this we had Post Doctoral researchers presenting on a range of different topics. Dr Tony Ellis (University of Salford) talked about "Spectres of shame: exploring shame dynamics and inequality in male violence." Dr Julia Swallow (University of Leeds): "The role of instruments for screening cognitive function and Alzheimer's disease: a sociological exploration." The discussion was lively and attendance as always was good.

Our second group meeting in 2016 was ran in conjunction with the Digital Sociology group. This meeting was held in the 4th of July 2016 at Leeds Beckett University. The meeting was titled Digital Health/Digital Capitalism. Speakers included:

- Nick Fox, The University of Sheffield
- Tamar Sharon, Maastrich University
- David Hill, University of Liverpool
- Joseph Savirithmu, University of Liverpool
- Christel De Maeyer, Artevelde University College Ghent and Eindhoven University of Technology
- Lynne Pettinger, University of Warwick; Ewen Speed, University of Essex; Andrew Goffey, University of Nottingham
- Federica Lucivero, King's College, London
- Graham Scambler

There were 45 attendees and the meeting was organised and hosted by Dr Chris Till (Leeds Beckett University). Discussions included the impact which digital technologies have had on peoples' lives, how they relate to one another and think about themselves and their capacities. It brought together scholars interested in the impacts of the digital on ideas and practices of health and the workings of capitalist economies and how the two come together. Specific topics addressed included:

- the application of new materialist theories to the use of personal medical technologies
- the political economy of the moves made by digital corporations such as Google into healthcare
- the impact of automation of care on temporality and health
- the legal and ontological implications for digital health data
- the incorporation of sleep into notions of productivity through digital tracking systems
- the incitement to competition through the digital strategy as part of the Health and Social Care Act 2012
- the implications for patient empowerment of digital patient records
- the question of whether "financial capitalism" or "digital capitalism" is primary in changes to health

This year we plan to hold elections for postdoctoral researchers to join the convener's group at our first meeting.