

*Healthscapes*  
The Newsletter of the European Society  
for Health and Medical Sociology

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**Letter from the President**

**The 16th biennial ESHMS congress focused on technologies, policies and experiences around healthy lives**

The 16th biennial congress of the European Society for Health and Medical Sociology took place at the University of Geneva, 27-29th June, this year. With 225 accepted abstracts the conference marked a new record of participants.

The main aim of the conference was to address the imperative of health in European societies and the way the dominant norm of leading healthy lives is embedded in the experiences of the people as well as the policies and technologies that relate to it. The main theme was highlighted from different perspectives by three key note presentations covering biocitizenship in the era of neoliberalism (prof. Céline Lafontaine from the University of Montréal), the uncertainties of screening (dr. Natalie Armstrong from the University of Leicester) and aging in the context of the imperative of health and of the fourth age (prof. Paul Higgs from the University College London).

The ESHMS granted two awards, one for the best paper, the other for the best poster. Two best papers were selected. Heini Väisänen (University of Southampton, United Kingdom) was awarded for the study « Timing of abortions, births and relationship transitions in Finland” and Katrijn Delaruelle (Ghent University, Belgium) for the study entitled « The reversed gender gap and the education gradient in health: A cohort perspective ». The best poster award was granted to a research group lead by Laura Kestilä from the National Institute of Health and Welfare (Finland) on a study analyzing “Childhood adversities and socioeconomic position as predictors of leisure-time physical inactivity in early adulthood”.

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The final day of the congress included a Round Table highlighting the contribution of health and medical sociology to health care and health policies. The panelists Piet Bracke (University of Ghent, Belgium), Paula Feder-Bubis (Ben Gurion University of the Negev, Israel), Yves Jackson (Geneva University Hospitals, Switzerland) and Nathalie Roebbel (WHO, Geneva, Switzerland) stressed the great potential that our discipline holds for contributing to the policies and the society even though the current policy climate may be somewhat less welcoming to research involvement.

Along with the high level of the presentations participants praised the fluent, friendly and skilful organizing of the congress. This mastery is to be thanked for by the local organising committee headed by Claudine Burton-Jeangros.

The next conference will be hosted by ISCTE - Instituto Universitário de Lisboa (ISCTE-IUL) in 2018 in Lisbon. The local organising committee is chaired by Tiago Correia.

*Sakari Karvonen*



## ESHMS 4TH SPECIAL INTEREST MEETING

24-25.08.2017

LOCATION: UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX, BRIGHTON, UK

### *Discourses of Health in Old Age: Changing Societies and their Consequences for Population Health and Wellbeing*

The aim of this Special Interest Meeting is to examine critically the discourses of ageing and health in Europe, the nature of change in societies and their implications for health and wellbeing in national, European and global contexts.

For example, a growing expectation of healthy, active or 'successful' ageing is voiced by Western governments and the mass media which anticipate older people engaging with more individualised health regimes as the population lives increasingly longer lives with more time spent in paid employment. However, concerns over population ageing and its effect on national healthcare systems are increasingly being voiced across the globe. 'Apocalyptic demography' (Gee, 2000) is an ideological position that portrays increasing numbers of older people putting intolerable strain on formal healthcare systems and families. In this context, older people become 'a ticking time bomb' or a 'burden' on the state and their loved ones.

Sociologically and/or epidemiologically informed contributions are sought for this two-day meeting that examine how societies, social care systems and families influence discourses of health and wellbeing in ageing societies.

Submissions focusing on ageing and health, employment, social and cultural change and wellbeing are welcome, together with papers that address more broadly the social positioning and determinants of health experiences among people and societies, and social change and its consequences for population health and wellbeing. As in the previous ESHMS Special Interest Meetings we particularly encourage comparative contributions. Apart from theoretical, qualitative and quantitative contributions focusing on Europe we also welcome work comparing European countries with countries in other world regions.

The Meeting will also focus on providing opportunities to create new globally oriented research collaborations.

#### **Format**

The format of the Meeting will be in-depth discussions of full high quality paper presentations. The workshop is limited to 25 presentations in two parallel working groups. Each paper will have a 40-minute time slot, with 15 minutes for the presenter, 10 minutes for a discussant, and 15 minutes for general audience questions.

#### **Participants**

We are keen to receive submissions from postdoctoral researchers and PhD students in the final stage of their research. Early PhD students are welcome when accompanied by their supervisor.

We welcome participants as either presenters and/or discussants.

#### **Submission for participants who wish to present should include:**

An extended abstract (word limit 800 words)

Contact details of the author (name, affiliation, email and postal address)

Notification of whether you are willing and able to be discussant for (an)other paper(s) Submission for discussants should only include contact details (name, affiliation, email and postal address)

**The deadline** for submission is 3rd April 2017.

Acceptance of abstracts will be announced by 17th April 2017. Accepted presenters should send full papers by 10th June 2017 (APA style, 7000 words, tables and references not included).



Submissions should be sent by email to  
**Professor Karen Lowton**  
[k.lowton@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:k.lowton@sussex.ac.uk)

Registration fees for this meeting will be publicised shortly.

**\*PLEASE NOTE THE CHANGE OF DATE\***  
**Thursday 24th August and Friday 25th 2017**

## WSF Advertising Blurb for ESHMS Newsletter

Welfare states are at a critical turning point. The development of welfare systems was one of the defining characteristics of the 20th century, especially in Europe. However, in times of change, it is important to re-think “the welfare state” with a program of innovative research designed to ask, and answer, fundamental questions about the design, delivery and experience of welfare in the 21st century. The Welfare State Futures Program focuses on five research clusters: Health, Migration, Welfare State Attitudes, Child & Family Welfare, and Globalization & Inequalities. Hence, WSF research might be of interest for you and your colleagues in the fields of health and medical sociology.



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You can start following the WSF blog at

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## The sociomedical thematic session during the National Sociological Congress, Gdańsk, Poland, September 14th 2016

On 14 September 2016 in Gdańsk during the National Sociological Congress the thematic session organized by the Section for Health and Medical Sociology, Polish Society of Sociology was held. The session entitled 'Applications of sociology in medicine and public health – accomplishments, neglected areas, development prospects' was dedicated to the current status and future prospects of the application of the results of socio-medical research in clinical medicine and public health. The meeting was conducted by Assoc. Prof. Michał Skrzypek from Medical University of Lublin and Prof. Antonina Ostrowska from the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences, who chaired the Scientific Committee.

The opening lecture (Prof. Cezary Włodarczyk from Collegium Medicum, Jagiellonian University) dedicated to a reflection on the erosion of the category of "professionalism" applied to medicine, contained reflection on the mechanisms of impact of professional ideology on the functioning of health care systems, and also on their humanist potential. The second plenary lecture (Prof. Beata Tobiasz-Adamczyk from Collegium Medicum, Jagiellonian University) was about the role of networks and social ties as determinants of health status and the quality of life of the elderly. The next plenary presentation (Assoc. Prof. Włodzimierz Piątkowski, from Maria Curie-Skłodowska University) was concerned with the social aspects of the primary prevention of cervical cancer and the final lecture, presented by Assoc. Prof. Wojciech Bielecki, (from Medical University of Łódź), contained a diagnosis and interpretation of the risk level of cardiovascular diseases in Polish society based on the latest results of the WOBASZ II program (Multi-centre National Population Health Examination Survey).

After the plenary lectures, seven oral presentations were delivered, which covered: the problems of health

promotion at the workplace; institutional status of the sociology of health and medicine in Poland and the prospects of development of the subdiscipline; the professional identity of new caring professions; ways of experiencing Recklinghausen's disease; lay ways of understanding cancer by the elderly; mechanisms of social inclusion of chronically ill persons based on the results of the PATHWAYS program (Participation to Healthy Workplace and Inclusive Strategies in the Work Sector), as well as the issues of social health inequalities during childhood as exemplified by the City of Łódź.

All lectures and presentations delivered during the session, though varied thematically, alluded to the issue of the application potential of the results coming from the health and medical sociology studies. The session outcomes show that in-depth reflection by medical sociologists is required regarding the strategies for implementing the results of socio-medical studies in the practice of public health and in clinical medicine, taking into account both institutional and paradigmatic barriers arising from strong biomedical dominance in these spheres. It appears that the principal problem of scholars conducting application studies remains to develop effective ways of transition from know to how. This question is the more important because the implementation of the sociological contextual approach in the analysis of behavioral aspects of cardiovascular and oncological prevention as well as in reference to other health challenges is the condition for its actual efficacy seen in terms of lasting behavioral change. The dominant deep-rootedness of Polish medical sociology in medical institutions (medical universities, medical research institutes, etc.) allows us to think optimistically of the prospects for the development of the application trend in socio-medical studies in Poland; however, it was strongly emphasized during the debate that this should not happen at the expense of 'blurring' the specificity of the sociological approach to health because this would mean the loss of the most important value added, contributed to biomedicine and public health by sociological investigations.

The organizers and participants express their gratitude to Professor Antonina Ostrowska for her scientific support and contribution in all stages of work related to the session organization and its conducting.



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## THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON “PROCESSES OF MEDICALIZATION IN CONTEMPORARY POLISH SOCIETY”

15 April 2016, Lublin, Poland



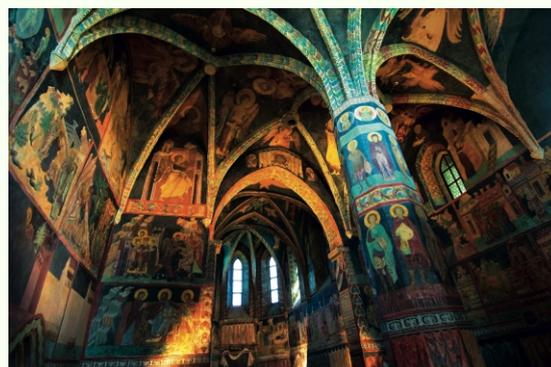
In response to the growing interest of Polish social scientists in the problem of medicalization, the national conference on “Processes of Medicalization in Contemporary Polish Society” was organized on **15 April 2016 by the Institute of Sociology, Maria Curie Skłodowska University**. The conference was attended by sociologists, anthropologists and philosophers from nine Polish cities and sixteen universities (including medical ones) and research institutes. During one plenary and six thematic sessions thirty five lectures were delivered.

During thematic sessions it has been confirmed the existence of the phenomena of medicalization of infertility and perinatal care system and furthermore demedicalization of births, - the last one manifested by the growing popularity of the home births in Poland.

The conference participants indicated also the need to pay attention to the medicalization of the process of transformation of healthcare and social care institutions, professions (nurses, and social workers) and practice. They also pointed to the development of new biomedical criteria for norm and pathology as ones of the current manifestations of the process of medicalization in Poland.

As a continuation of the historical reflection on medicalization, in several presentations the authors analyzed the phenomenon of medicalization of psychiatry and mental disorders based on examples of social problems related to ADHD and depression.

Some speakers presented results of their studies on the changes in attitudes of the lay people towards medicines and dietary supplements under the influence of the pharmaceutical companies' marketing.



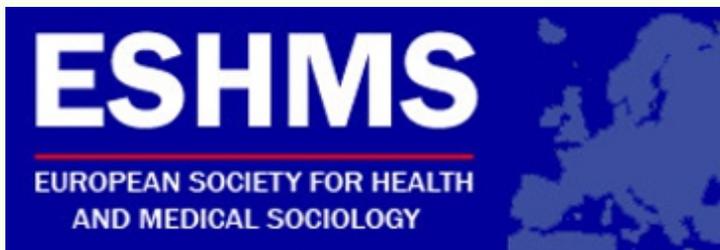
The conference indicated the growing interest of Polish sociology and allied social sciences in studying of the manifestations of the influence of global processes of medicalization on the course of such processes in Polish contexts. Advances in medicine, genetics, pharmacology were considered as the main driving forces of medicalization in Poland.

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K N | SOCJOLOGIA MEDYCYNY  
K S | PROMOCJA ZDROWIA  
MEDIA

### III National Scientific and Training Conference "Sociology of medicine - health promotion - media"

Wroclaw, Poland, 25-27.09.2017

We have a pleasure to inform you about upcoming the conference, being third in a series of national scientific and training conferences, dedicated to the influence of social macro trends and social macro phenomena on health. This year conference will be devoted to the issue of relationships between mass media and health. There is assumed to present the issue from theoretical and practical perspective and in the context of the research achievements of different disciplines such as general sociology, medical sociology, sociology of culture, health promotion, medicine, public health, psychology, pedagogy, ethics and philosophy. The sessions will be held in Polish.

The report from the conference will be presented in the second issue of the ESHMS newsletter next year.



#### ORGANIZERS:

Department of Humanistic Sciences in Medicine, Wrocław Medical University.  
Creatively for Health Foundation, Wrocław.

Department of Health and Social Affairs of the Municipal Office in Wrocław.

Public Health and Management Journal. Scientific Papers on Health, Institute of Public Health, Faculty of Health Sciences at the Jagiellonian University.

Section of Sociology of Health and Medicine - Polish Sociological Association.

All of the current information in English you can track on  
<http://www.kreatywniedlzdrowia.pl/IIIsocialconference.htm>



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## Happy Christmas and NEW YEAR 2017



All members of the ESHMS are encouraged to send any material that they would like to see included in future newsletters.

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