

TRACK 28. THE 'MEANING' AND 'DOING' OF BODIES AND GENDER IN MEDICINE AND HEALTHCARE

The conference track will follow the development of thinking of and talking about bodies doing things and creating meaning, through individual and historical lifecycles experienced in broad medical contexts. Thus, “bodily beings” are differently constituted in medical schools, hospitals and surgeries, research labs and everyday living environments, viewed through and connected to mechanical and electronic appliances, inscribed with biomedical discourses and socio-culturally based roles, such as gender, sex, race, impairment.

The human body can be viewed simultaneously as a substrate for healthcare concerns and as an entity that acts and is enacted in the varied practices of medical research and clinical care. In their cultural variety, they are representing a “bodily-being-in-the-world” (Haraway) as well as a “body multiple” (Mol): Human embodiment in medicine is staged against a variety of backdrops, involving different patients and families, doctors and carers, material and virtual macro- and micro-anatomies in research and teaching, all playing different interacting roles on the set. Medical education, itself a construct of complex socio-cultural expectations of “good practice”, is but one factor that shapes specific anticipations of “normal” bodies and individual ‘health’ as a legitimating telos of intervention. Such governance is typical, even in cases where the clinical significance of a stated condition is far from consensual.

The track is designed particularly to introduce and explore new conceptual, theoretical, and methodological perspectives from different disciplines that help advance an understanding of the complexity of ‘knowing’ and ‘doing’ bodies in medicine. Ensuing discussions will therefore be of interest for a broad range of disciplines, from medicine studies, medical anthropology and ethnology to epistemology and ontology of the body, medical education and medical humanities.

Abstracts of no more than 500 words should be sent by email (following website instructions) by 2010 March 15th.

Convenors

Alan Petersen is Discipline Convenor for Sociology at Monash University, Melbourne, Australia. He is currently undertaking a study ‘Stem cell technologies: how scientists , policymakers, and other stakeholders engage with the public’.

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Samantha Regan de Bere is a lecturer at Peninsula College of Medicine and Dentistry in Plymouth/Exeter/Truro, England. Her research is concerned with understanding the impact of discursive systems of governance on complex medical 'texts'.

Antje Kampf is Associate Professor ("Juniorprofessor") for gender aspects of the history, philosophy and ethics of medicine at Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz Medical Center, Germany. Her research focuses on the historical epistemology and ontology of male bodies in biomedicine.

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Rainer Brömer is lecturer ("wiss. Mitarbeiter") at the Institute for the History, Philosophy and Ethics of Medicine at Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz Medical Center, Germany, jointly with the Institute for Mathematics, History of Mathematics and Science Group. His main interest regards the role of the body in human anatomy in the Ottoman Empire, ca. 1600-1900, and more generally, the history, philosophy and ethics of medicine in the Muslim world. (www.rainer-broemer.name)