CURRENT RESEARCH

This section allows researchers and postgraduates to share details of new and current research projects and recently awarded research grants of specific interest to medical sociologists. If you would like to include details of your own current research or recent award in the next edition of MSO please go to: http://www.medicalsociologyonline.org.

The shifting locus of care: Deinstitutionalisation and balance of care in mental health policy and practice in France and England (working title)

PhD researcher: Emilie Courtin

Institute of Political Studies, Strasbourg, France
Institute of Psychiatry, King’s College, London, UK

emilie.courtin@kcl.ac.uk

Emilie Courtin began her PhD in October 2006 on a full-time basis and expects to complete in October 2010. She is funded by the French Ministry of Education and Research.

Supervisors

Professor Vincent Dubois, Institute of Political Studies, Strasbourg
Professor Martin Knapp, London School of Economics and Institute of Psychiatry (during her visiting appointment at the IoP).

Abstract

Aims and Objectives

The aim is to assess the consequences of deinstitutionalisation in France and England. We will try to understand the recent development in the balance of care in mental health practice in the daily life of a community mental health team and an associated in-patient unit in both countries. The objective is to understand the day-to-day reality of the transition from hospitals to entities outside the hospital and how the different actors involved interact. The analysis is conducted at three levels: from the perspective of care staff (doctors, nurses, social workers), of patients, and of the families.
Methods

The approach to the task of accounting for the nature and character of this shift combines both sociology and history. First, analysis of the relevant literature and archives will be conducted. During the second phase, in-depth interviews will be made with relevant actors as well as observations of the daily routines of mental health services in both countries. The third phase will pilot in-depth interviews with patients and families. All interviews will be tape recorded, transcribed and analysed.

Findings to date

The literature review as well as the analysis of the interviews made in France clearly shows that mental health policy can only be understood as one strand within the wider health and social care context and that it lies at the interface of what is increasingly seen as a continuous spectrum of policy and related services and practices. Mental health policy is very much a ‘mixed economy’, involving the state, the market, the family and the voluntary sector. The study of the deinstitutionalisation process from an historical and sociological perspective gives valuable insights into the changing balance of mental health services both at micro and macro levels.

Related conference and poster presentations

Health care system change: insights from the deinstitutionalisation process in France and England, Explaining healthcare system change workshop, University of Bremen, December 4-5, 2008.

Mental health and psychiatric practice in France: a renewed approach or the success of a catch-all category?, Poster presentation, 4th Hera Annual Conference and 1st European Conference for Collaborative Research in Humanities, Strasbourg, 8-9 October 2008.

Mental health and psychiatric practice in France: a renewed approach or the success of a catch-all category? British Sociological Association Medical Sociology Group Annual Conference, University of Sussex, Brighton, 6-8 September 2008.

The architecture of change: rethinking the deinstitutionalisation process in France and England, Writing the history of psychiatry after 1945 workshop, Université Libre de Bruxelles, Belgium, 30-31 May 2008.