

Reproductive health through the life course

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Reproduction affects everyone and the reproductive decisions that people make throughout their life are social events reflecting certain values, norms and structures within society. It concerns individuals, significant others, families, health professionals, as well as governments and welfare states. This makes qualitative, quantitative and interdisciplinary research especially relevant, and it enables sociologists to bridge the micro-macro divide. Sociology of reproduction is not a new study domain within the sociology of health and illness, but it is however considered as a niche subfield, or even forgotten or overlooked.

A session regarding reproductive health invites researchers working in this field to meet, strengthen their network and exchange research ideas. Because topics concerning reproductive health are often embedded within other subdomains such as gender and health, risk behaviours, welfare states, inequalities and social determinants of health and health policy, services and promotion, other sessions are also of interest to these scholars.

This session's focus will be on different aspects of reproductive life course and its health related outcomes. As such, papers related to the following are welcome: (1) Determinants and consequences regarding men's and women's fertility behaviour, including research on contraceptive choices, childbearing decision making and assisted reproductive technologies, (2) Maternal and paternal wellbeing, which is closely linked to some key subjects in sociology such as social stratification and inequality, migration, mobility and network, the conditions in which birth takes place, and work-family conflict, (3) Prenatal and postnatal health care, with a focus on policy and practice, health professionals and medicalization (e.g. breastfeeding practices and its association with social inequalities).

The session welcomes papers using different methodological techniques, and encourages comparative research – both within and across countries – and research that pays attention to both the micro and macro context. Papers will be grouped according to topic expertise and methodological likeness. An announcement will be posted through several University e-lists (in Belgium), Departments of Sociology and Medicine across Europe and abroad.

Another forum is the Belgian Health Care Knowledge Centre (via Dr. Wendy Christiaens), which enlists sociologists as well as health care professionals.

Deadline to submit your abstract: 20th of December 2015



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