

2017 MAYS Annual Meeting – REPORT

The 8th Annual Medical Anthropology Young Scholars (MAYS) Annual Meeting “Medical Anthropology Beyond Medical Borders” was held at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland on the 15th and 16th of June, 2017. The conference was organised by Lilian Kennedy (University of Edinburgh) and Mari Lo Bosco (ICS-ULisbon), and in collaboration with SoMA (Students of Medical Anthropology), of the University of Edinburgh. In thanks to a generous grant from EASA, we were able to organised travel scholarships for five participants, and SoMA sponsored accommodation scholarships for four participants.

During the two-day meeting, 25 participants from countries around the world, presented their work in three different parallel groups. This allowed participants to exchange feedback on each other’s work in a peer-review format. These parallel groups were organised by the themes: working with medical professionals and medical students, public dissemination of research, and research on biomedical research.

As in the previous annual meetings, the program consisted of keynote lectures, parallel sessions and workshops. The MAYS meeting was commenced by a welcome speech by Ian Harper, Chair of the EdCMA (Edinburgh Centre for Medical Anthropology) and Professor of Anthropology at the University of Edinburgh. The keynote speech, entitled *Who Gets Hijacked?: Navigating Collaborative Medical Anthropology Research in Nigeria*, was given by Daniel Jordan Smith, Chair of Anthropology at Brown University. The Keynote speech was opened to a broader public of students, PhD candidates, and postdoctoral researchers in Anthropology and health-related fields across the University.

Since the theme of this conference ‘Medical Anthropology Beyond Academic Borders’ addressed both the current academic work of participants, as well the issue of making this work application to the world beyond academia, this conference also had workshops with addressed both these academic and practical themes. Seven different workshops were organised, across the two days.

The first day’s workshops were led by people working within academia:

- Daniel Jordan Smith, Chair of Anthropology at Brown University, who spoke on building an academic career in Medical Anthropology.
- Neil Thin, Senior Lecturer at the University of Edinburgh, who spoke on MOOQs.
- Alex Edmonds, Professor of Anthropology at the University of Edinburgh, who spoke on writing on journalistic platforms.
- Laura Cockburn, from the Knowledge and Exchange department within the Social and Political Science at the University of Edinburgh, who was meant to speak on how to present the impact of one’s research in grant applications. Unfortunately she got sick the day before and could not attend.

The second day's workshops were focussed on health-related research careers beyond academia, and led by those who had earned a PhD in Anthropology:

- Anne Jepson, Senior Researcher within SPiCE, led a workshop on her career trajectory and her current responsibilities as researcher for the Scottish Parliament.
- Joseph Long, Research Manager at Scottish Autism, led a workshop on his current responsibilities as Research Manager, and how to market your academic career to the non-profit sector.
- Kelly Sheill-Davis, Research Manager at MacMillan Cancer, was scheduled to lead a workshop on her career trajectory and current job responsibilities, however also fell ill and was unable to attend.

For many participants, the MAYS annual meeting provided a first opportunity to present their work to peers in a constructive and friendly atmosphere. The discussions in the parallel group sessions and workshops were lively, and covered both feedback on students' work as well as debate about how to best make anthropology's findings and methods applicable to wider audiences. The conference dinner was well attended by both students and workshop leaders and allowed for these discussions to continue in a relaxed environment. Many of the feedback forms from the event remarked on the helpfulness of discussion about post-PhD research careers and the friendliness and sense of community at the event.

In August 2016, Mari Lo Bosco stepped down as coordinator. Elections were held in July, in which all MAYS members were invited to vote for one of five candidates, using an online form. Possible candidates applied for the position by sending in their CV and a statement describing their plans as MAYS coordinator, if they were to serve a two-year term. Erica Niebauer (Universität Heidelberg) was elected as a new coordinator and Lilian Kennedy continue as coordinator until 2018. The aim, as in previous years, is to have coordinators serve two-year terms, with new coordinators being elected each year. This way, a more senior coordinator who has already planned a MAYS annual meeting will be on hand to help the new coordinator as they take the lead planning the next MAYS conference at their institution.

The MAYS 2018 meeting is set to be hosted by the Universität Heidelberg, dates to be decided.