

13th Conference of the European Sociological Association

29 August – 1 September 2017 Athens, Greece

RN16 'Sociology of Health and Illness'

CALL FOR PAPERS - deadline: 1 February 2017

[RN16_h]: Ethical implications of a sociological approach to health and illness

As social scientists, we are frequently asked to prove the fulfilment of ethical standards in research, especially when working on health and illness. This is due to, on the one side, the subjects we collect data with being seen as vulnerable (as patients), but also because data about an individual's health may convey many intimate information; on the other, to the fact that ethical consequences of health professions' are more scrutinized, be it for religious reasons or as a way of preventing excesses from the past. Nonetheless, health sociologists seem to underestimate the ethical implications of their work. Indeed, in spite of drawing images of how individuals, communities and society envision health and illness, organize and deliver care, conform to rules of hygiene, sexuality or therapeutic recommendations, etc., one can argue that ethical discussion and consideration is more frequently a response to external requests than a spontaneous attitude. The scarce coercibility of the Deontological Codes and reduced availability of ethics committees organized within our disciplines, might induce health sociologists to overlook bioethics and its implications in research. Moreover, ethical committees are often composed by professionals from the most diverse areas, outside social sciences, which requires an extra effort of translation and negotiation so to match their ethical standards. Consequently, we are still lacking a set of tools to address the ethical issues at stake. Considering the methodological implications of ethical concerns and that methodological design is one of the factors that most affects research findings, this lack of preparation has fundamental repercussion for the epistemology of research. Acknowledging the variety across Europe, that generate the most diverse bioethical challenges, we call for contributions on, but not limited to, the following points:

- How to define bioethics in a sociological perspective?
- Ethical implications of research on (healthcare receivers'/health professionals/bureaucratic administrators, etc.) subjectivity;
- Fundamental rights and ethics of life in sociological research;
- Ethical patterns and practical decisions among professionals working in health areas (formal and informal caregivers, sociologists studying health related issues, political decision makers, etc.)
- Sociological research and the institution of legitimation: how can health sociologists organize and scrutinize their own research work?
- Ethics and research's epistemology: what are the impacts of bioethical decisions in the way we know the social world?

Abstracts should not exceed 250 words

Abstracts must be submitted online – *in response to this RN 16 specific session* - to the submission platform: [http://www.europeansociology.org./](http://www.europeansociology.org/)

For further information, feel free to contact the Session Organisers:

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