

Targeting Therapies: Exploring the Cultural & Normative Dimensions of 'Targeted' Approaches to Biomedicine and Public Health

Multidisciplinary Conference
University College Dublin, Ireland
2nd – 3rd May 2024

It is increasingly common for governments to commit, symbolically and economically, to dreams of therapeutic innovation in healthcare. This often relates to 'targeted' approaches, such as pharmaceuticals aimed at very specific kinds of disease (e.g. certain cancers), which might respond only to people with particular genetic variants - imagined and innovated through the idiom of 'precision' and 'personalised' medicine. At the same time, we can see other 'targeted' approaches to healthcare in action; for instance, psychological therapy services tailored to specific populations and interventions that stratify and construct publics in response to existing and emerging forms of illness (e.g. restrictions on the movements of groups regarded as highly vulnerable to COVID-19; increasingly narrow stratification of mental health diagnoses etc).

Through this conference, we will critically examine the design, delivery, and implications of 'targeted' biomedicine and public health to help us to better understand the dynamics between science, healthcare, and society. While research from the humanities and social sciences on biomedicine and public health often keeps these domains apart, our event will seek to consider the commonalities between them.

We welcome approaches from bioethics, gender studies, history, law, medical humanities, political philosophy, and science studies (among others) to explore the cultural and normative dimensions of 'targeted' approaches and interventions in biomedicine and public health. Through comparative analysis across these disciplines, we hope the event will help us to explore how different cultural, historical, legal, scientific, and healthcare contexts interact in the shaping and deployment of 'targeted' approaches. We invite papers that consider how societal histories, traditions, and legal processes affect how medical research is funded and conducted and how healthcare is prioritised and delivered. We also look forward to presentations that will examine how law, ethics, and cultures are impacted and contoured through targeted approaches to health.



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SUBMISSION PROCESS:

To apply to present at this conference, please submit an abstract of around 500 words of your research to gemma.watts@ucd.ie by 1st February 2024. Successful applicants will be notified by the end of February 2024. Should you have any questions prior to submission regarding the suitability of your research proposal to the conference, please contact either Prof Martyn Pickersgill (martyn.pickersgill@ed.ac.uk) or Prof Susi Geiger (susi.geiger@ucd.ie) directly.

TRAVEL BURSARIES:

For early career researchers there are a limited number of travel bursaries available to present at this conference. Early career applicants who are interested in applying for a travel bursary can specify this in their email when submitting the abstract, and please provide a breakdown of the anticipated cost for travel, accommodation and subsistence expenses. The travel bursary will cover a maximum of 2 nights in a hotel.



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