Social Sciences & Health Innovations:
Making Health Public

May 22-24, 2017, Tomsk, Russia

The goals of preventing disease, prolonging life, and promoting health have long been the locus of efforts by states, cities and other actors in the public health field. Over the past decades public health has built a sophisticated disease surveillance apparatus to identify and track population health issues, and has worked to generate knowledge on the (social) causes of poor health. Public health has brought to life policies and large scale programmes to monitor and prevent infectious diseases, to stimulate healthy eating and living, and to build healthy environments and infrastructures. Currently, the links between global ecological problems (air, water, climate) and public health are increasingly recognized. At the same time classic divides between clinical medicine and public health are vanishing, with new genetic technologies being used to detect risk groups and many clinical specialists recognizing the value of healthy environments and life styles.

Against this background, this conference aims to explore how health is, and can be, made public. What exactly does the 'public' stand for in public health? Public refers to collectives and solidarities on a local, national and global scale; but how are they made, maintained and legitimized amidst diversity of the globalizing world? Public, also refers to the responsibilities of public institutions for health, and engagement of these institutions with people's concerns. However, during the last decades it has become clear that there are often big gaps between institutional perspectives and the perspectives of communities and citizens on health and ways to improve it. International debates about HIV prevention have been an eye-opener in this respect. Many public health bodies tend to work in a top down manner and do not attune well to local practices, needs and perspectives. One often wonders, where the publics of public health are. Does the development of evidence-based public policies improve the quality of public health programs, or does it increase the gap with everyday practices? What counts as relevant evidence? Which kinds of knowledge shape public health programmes and how is this knowledge developed? The rise of big data poses the question of how to relate statistical risk technologies to narratives and everyday life notions of risk, illness, responsibility, and a good life. Is it necessary to make public health more participatory and more 'public' to make it more effective, and if so, how to do that? Which roles do innovations, whether, conceptual, technical or social, play in this regard and how can they contribute into 'making health public'? How do media construct health as a public issue, and how can media – through encouraging literacy, storytelling, and entertainment – contribute to empowering publics?

Social sciences play a central role in analysing public health innovations' dynamics and for understanding the corresponding challenges. This conference examines the complexities of making health public by engaging the perspectives of the social sciences, including science and technology studies (STS), medical anthropology, sociology and history. Furthermore, it is meant to serve as a platform to facilitate dialogue between social and

biomedical scientists, public health professionals and policy makers, and for engagement between scholars and practitioners working in the field of health innovations in the post-Soviet region and globally. The conference considers public health-related innovations on different levels (from the community level to national programmes and global efforts) and of different kinds (conceptual, organisational, political). Such innovations can include, but are not limited to, new tools for diagnosing antibiotic resistance in remote areas, food fortification programmes to address nutrient deficiencies, the use of mobile devices to encourage healthier living, the construction of new urban infrastructures to deal with traffic and garbage, and the use of media to improve mental health after traumatic events.

Conference speakers:

- **Tiago Moreira** (Reader at School of Applied Social Sciences, Durham University)
- **Martine Bouman** (Scientific Director of the Center for Media & Health and Prof. Entertainment Media and Social Change, Erasmus University Rotterdam)
- **Vikram Patel** (Professor of International Mental Health and Wellcome Trust Principal Research Fellow in Clinical Science, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine; the Pershing Square Professor of Global Health, Harvard University) – to be confirmed
- **Susanne Bauer** (Associate Professor at the Centre for Technology, Innovation and Culture, University of Oslo)
- **Klasien Horstman** (Professor of Philosophy of Public Health, Maastricht University)

We welcome both individual paper proposals and proposals for closed thematic panels. Please submit your applications via the electronic form by **15 January 2017.** Individual paper proposals should be submitted here; Panel proposals should be submitted here. If you have any questions contact the conference organizers: healthinnovations2017@gmail.com.

Individual paper submissions should be limited to 600 words (including a short CV up to 100 words). The title of the paper should be limited to 10 words. To assist the program chairs in grouping the papers into sessions, please add three keywords.

Panel proposals should include a title, panel description (up to 300 words), and a list of panel speakers (not more than 6 panelists) with their affiliations and titles of the conference presentations.

This conference is the third international event organized as a collaborative endeavor between Maastricht University (the Netherlands), and Tomsk State University (the Russian Federation), with participation from Siberian State Medical University (the Russian Federation). The previous conference in the series took place in 2015 and was titled Social Sciences and Medical Innovations: Doing things together (for details see: http://en.past-centre.ru/conferences-seminars/social-sciences-and-medical-innovations-2015/)