

Health and Society Seminar Series



Grassroots to government: Exploring social inclusion policy and health inequalities in an Australian context

Gemma Carey

Centre for Health and Society, Melbourne School of Population Health at the University of Melbourne, Australia.

Thursday, November 25, 2010
12:00 - 1:00 p.m.

The Rose Room, 3E47
3rd Floor, TRW Building,
3280 Hospital Drive NW, Calgary

This presentation details a policy-to-practice study of one of Australia's most significant broad-scale 'public health' policies of recent times.

Over the last two decades, Australia, like many countries, has experienced widening inequalities in the social determinants of health. In part, this has been a consequence of the dominance of neoliberalism in Australian governance discourses. At the 2007 election, the Australian Labor Party ran on a platform of increased equality and social inclusion. Since taking office they have instigated a broad-scale policy intervention, known as the Social Inclusion Agenda (SIA). The government anticipates that the SIA will combat exclusion and disadvantage by promoting participation and through re-orientating social services. While it is hoped that the SIA will achieve institutional change, emphasis is being placed on supporting non-state actors to address disadvantage.

The SIA has the potential to significantly reduce inequalities in the social determinants of health. However, given the reliance on non-state actors, it is a challenging and risky policy intervention: how will organisations respond to the challenges thrown down by the SIA? Will there be sufficient change within state institutions? And, is social inclusion an appropriate, or useful, concept for those who work at the coalface of disadvantage?

Gemma Carey is a research fellow and PhD candidate at the Centre for Health and Society, Melbourne School of Population Health at the University of Melbourne, Australia. She is an NHMRC (Australian National Health and Medical Research Council) and one of the inaugural Sidney Myer Health scholars. She has worked in a variety of fields, including public health, anthropology, political science and primary care. She has an emerging track record in social policy and health, including publications in Health and Global Health Promotion.

This Seminar Series is hosted by the Population Health Intervention Research Centre (www.ucalgary.ca/PHIRC). We'd like the seminars to reflect a range of perspectives and interests. Please contact Lindsay Bradshaw, at ph (403) 210 9316; or by email bradshaw@ucalgary.ca if you have any ideas or suggestions for future speakers.



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