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# Social Science & Medicine

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## Changes at *Social Science & Medicine*

After 9 years service to the journal, Duncan Pedersen has recently stepped down as Senior Editor for our Medical Anthropology office. On behalf of the editorial team, I would like to thank Duncan for his substantial contribution to the development of the medical anthropology section of the journal over many years. We are pleased that Duncan will maintain his connection with the journal in the role of Advisory Editor. I am delighted to announce that Duncan's successor is Catherine Panter-Brick. Catherine is Professor of Anthropology and a member of the Institute of Hazard and Risk Research at Durham University, UK. Catherine's research interests are wide-ranging and include health and well-being, risk and adversity, maternal and child health, disease ecology and nutrition, the health of refugees and street children, and health interventions. Her recent publications include *Hormones, Health and Behaviour* (edited with Agustin Fuentes) and *Health, Risk and Adversity* (edited with Carol Worthman). Catherine's research is internationally wide-ranging covering areas such as Afghanistan, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Nepal, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Tanzania, and the UK.

*Social Science & Medicine* was recently rated by Thomson ISI as the world's most cited social science journal over the decade 1997–2007 (<http://in-cites.com/journals/top-soc.html>). This is a tribute to the authors who have submitted their most important research to the journal and recognition of the journal's truly international reach.

The journal continues to provide an international and interdisciplinary forum for the dissemination of empirical research findings and theoretical developments in all areas of common interest to social scientists, health practitioners and policy makers. In selecting papers for publication we place particular emphasis on originality and the potential international significance of the research. Authors of empirical papers and reviews are strongly encouraged to site their research theoretically and to develop their analysis beyond the descriptive presentation of findings. This objective, which has recently been discussed with regard to Medical Sociology by Senior Editor Sarah Nettleton (2007), applies generally to all areas of the journal (i.e. anthropology, economics, geography, psychology, social epidemiology, social policy, sociology) as well as to its interdisciplinary content. Our objective continues to be to publish papers which significantly

advance our understanding of existing issues and to open up new areas for debate. Since we will remain responsive to the interests of authors, what counts as significant will be determined by them. However, at the present time we would particularly like to encourage papers which address the following broad areas: the global health agenda, including environmental disasters, climate change, health in postcolonial settings, conflict and organised violence; migration and health (i.e. the international movement of people and of health workers); new technologies and health, new genetics, bioethics and personalised medicine; the relationship between biological and social factors, and mind and body, in health and illness; and research which evaluates the effectiveness of behaviour change interventions in different cultural contexts. While we do not regularly publish papers which address very specific aspects of research methods, such as the testing of research instruments, we do consider papers which introduce novel methodologies, particularly where they enable the empirical study of recent theoretical advances.

Readers will have noticed that we have recently introduced debates and commentaries on papers which raise particularly topical and controversial issues. To stimulate this we now ask reviewers to indicate if they believe that the paper they are reviewing warrants such a debate. We have also made Virtual Special Issues available online. Virtual Special Issues bring together and showcase collections of papers already published in the journal along with an introduction to the topic from a member of the editorial team. So far Virtual Special Issues on *Gender and Health* and on *Child Health* are available (and can be found at [www.elsevier.com/wps/find/S06\\_351.cws\\_home/SSM\\_vi](http://www.elsevier.com/wps/find/S06_351.cws_home/SSM_vi)) and several others are currently in development. We will also shortly be publishing position papers by leading researchers which take stock of existing research and reflect on future research directions on topics of significant current interest.

Importantly, our publication times have improved considerably. Currently it takes under 8 weeks from acceptance for an article to be 'in press' and online, a further 5 weeks until it is compiled into a citable volume and issue online, and only 3 more weeks until the print copy is released. Swift publication will be further facilitated by a move to a slightly larger physical format from Volume 68.

Finally, we would like to take this opportunity to thank our many international reviewers whose work makes such an important contribution to the quality of the journal.

### References

Nettleton, S. (2007). Retaining the sociology in medical sociology. *Social Science & Medicine*, 65, 2409–2412.

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