CDAS seminar series
2010/11

Dying

04 March 2011, 14.30 – 17.15
University of Bath, 3 East 2.20

Family carers

14.30 - Family experiences of the Intensive Care Unit: preliminary findings
Paula Smith, Department of Psychology, University of Bath

Receiving treatment on an intensive care unit (ICU) can be a traumatic experience for the patient and their family members, yet our knowledge of the long-term physical and psychological effects of ICU treatment, especially the effect on family members, is relatively limited. Early research into the needs and experience of the family has focused on the initial ICU experience and established that relatives experience a range of needs that can be broadly categorised into cognitive, emotional, social and practical (Verhaeghe et al 2005). This study sought to develop a longitudinal approach to the patient and family members' experience of the ICU environment from admission of the patient to discharge home. Inviting patients and family members into a research study within the first 24 hours or admission to ICU involves ethical and consent issues so a secondary aim of this study was to explore methodological issues associated with this work. This paper will present initial findings of the ethical and recruitment issues and analysis of time one interviews with five family members.

15.05 - Caring for a dying family member in the Republic of Moldova
Allan Kellehear, Department of Social & Policy Sciences, University of Bath

This talk reports the results of part of a national qualitative study of family care of the dying in the Republic of Moldova. The study was conducted as part of the research and policy development initiative between UNESCO and the Institute of Oncology in Chisinau (the capital). 100 families from a cross-section of the country were interviewed to identify their key experiences and needs when caring for a dying person at home. The results indicate great physical and psychological suffering from carers and the dying. Formal palliative care arrangements in the Republic have no effect on local care patterns. There is a great need for legal, health, and welfare reform particularly in the primary care sector if care circumstances are to improve.

15.40 - Coffee

Media

16.00 - Mediated dying: representations of Jade Goody’s death in tabloids & magazines
Daniel Ashton and Rebecca Feasey, Department of Film & Media Production, Bath Spa University

Jade Goody’s diagnosis and death from cervical cancer during 2009 provides opportunities for examining public responses to media representations and constructions of dying. Drawing on focus group research with young female magazine readers, this paper examines understandings of Jade as a celebrity and related issues of performance, publicity and promotion. Participant comments that Goody’s death “was sold” and that this was “not how cancer looks” signal the complexities and tensions around mediated dying.
Does the internet affect the way we die?
Tony Walter, Department of Social and Policy Sciences, University of Bath

Dying is irreducibly physical, but it is also social. Getting frail or terminally ill and then dying disrupts social networks; bereavement entails a restructuring of social engagement, with the living and the dead. The internet is also, and increasingly, social, so that the term ‘social network’ is nowadays as likely to refer to online as offline relationships. So how does the internet change social interaction around, and hence the experience, of dying, caring or mourning? This paper will look at dying and caring. The internet has the potential to make dying and caring a less isolating experience, to reduce the ‘social death’ of infirm elderly and their carers, and to enfranchise alternative dying narratives – though each of these potentials is problematic in various ways.

Future seminars:

Mourning and Memory
13 May 2011
10.15 – 13.05

CDAS conference

Death & Dying in the Digital Age
25-26 June 2011

How do the internet and other digital technologies affect how people die and mourn? How may their use in palliative and bereavement care be evaluated? Abstracts (250 words) are welcomed from health and social care practitioners, entrepreneurs, social science and humanities researchers, and computer scientists and designers. Topics could include but are not limited to:

- Dying: Do digital communications change the experience of dying? How are email, social network sites, blogs, etc used by dying people and their carers?
- Funerals and mourning: How are digital technologies used in and around the funeral? How do social networking sites change the experience of mourning? What is the online experience of communicating with the dead and talking to other mourners?
- Digital inheritance: Digital wills, digital archiving, digital archaeology, the mortality/immortality of digital data, Social Network Sites policies on deceased members.

The submission of abstracts closes on 14 March. Email cdas@bath.ac.uk with your submission, along with full contact details.

For full details on the conference, for conference updates and to book, visit the CDAS website at: http://www.bath.ac.uk/cdas/news/conferences/index.html

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