
Cutting off the circulation: ordering and managing excessive evidence

Megan Clinch*[†]

¹The Open University – United Kingdom

Abstract

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Abstract

During the last two decades a multitude of social scientific studies have demonstrated how diseases are accomplished through an emergent, and often pragmatic, system socio-technical relations. Developing this concern with the relations that constitute and sustain categories of disease, this paper will address what happens when they are excessive and cause the process of diagnosis and disease management to break down.

Based on an ethnographic account of the diagnosis and treatment of thyroid disease within the United Kingdom the paper will attempt to illustrate a situation where there are *too many* discordant relations for diagnostic categories and disease management systems to bear. Consequently, it will be described how the relations that constitute thyroid disease are, under particular conditions, cut in order to manage the excessive forms of evidence and possible accounts they produce.

The latter half of the paper will explore the sites and situations where such cuts are made and attempt to develop a framework through which visible and disappeared or ‘ghost’ relations, can be observed. In doing so the paper seeks to trace the ‘biomobility’ of thyroid disease, and other similar contested diseases, by tracing the logics that guide the cutting of relations and the consequent emergence of broadly intelligible and unintelligible biological assemblages.

*Speaker

[†]Corresponding author: megan.clinch@open.ac.uk