Reproductive and sexual health activism, c.1960-present

17-18 July 2018

University of Strathclyde
Glasgow

Over the last decades, there has been significant scholarly research into the history of reproductive and sexual health activism globally. Scholars have explored the impact of activist and grassroots groups in contexts where governments have failed to address reproductive and sexual health. In particular, the field has developed considerably in the US, where a number of important studies have emerged to examine diverse issues including feminist health, AIDS, LGBT, abortion and black health activism, and the importance of gender, race and class when considering these histories. In the European context, there has been important research into related issues, such as infertility and assisted reproduction, but new resources, including recently catalogued archives as well as digitisation and oral history projects have not been fully exploited. While there have been valuable histories of feminist activism outside the US, these have not emphasised reproductive health. Histories of reproduction, meanwhile, have tended to neglect activism.

This workshop will bring together historical research on reproductive and sexual health activism in any geographical context (c.1960-present). In particular, workshop participants will discuss methodologies for approaching the history of reproductive and health activism and consider how historical scholarship might be meaningfully utilised as a form of activism.

The workshop aims to address the following key questions:

- What have been the stories of individuals involved in reproductive and sexual health activism?
- How has reproductive and sexual health activism been influenced by questions of gender, race and class?
- What are the best ways to uncover the history of reproductive health activism?
- How can histories of activism reshape big stories in social and cultural history?
- Can academic scholarship function as activism?
- What do historians have to offer present-day activists and policy-makers?
- How can a global perspective enrich local histories of activism and vice versa?

Please send a 200-300 word abstract and brief biography to Dr Laura Kelly (L.e.kelly@strath.ac.uk) and Dr Jesse Olsynko-Gryn (jo312@cam.ac.uk) by Friday, 13 April, 2018. Papers from early-career scholars, contributions offering inter-disciplinary perspectives or abstracts from individuals outside the academy are particularly welcome.