

# What are the social implications of medical screening?

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Delegates from around the world will gather for the launch of a new book on medical screening edited by University of Leicester academics.

*The Sociology of Medical Screening: Critical Perspectives, New Directions*, a collection of essays examining the sociological issues surrounding population-based medical screening, will be launched with an international symposium at the University on September 4.

The book was edited by Dr Natalie Armstrong and Dr Helen Eborall of the Social Science Applied to Healthcare Improvement Research (SAPPHIRE) group within the University's Department of Health Sciences, and published by Wiley-Blackwell, having first appeared as a special issue of the journal *Sociology of Health and Illness*.

It considers many of the social implications of medical screening from a sociological perspective. As advancements in technology make it possible to screen for an increasing number of medical conditions, the editors wanted to draw together sociological work on this key strategy of preventive medicine and ask important questions about: whether and how population-based screening should be implemented; how people and clinicians experience and manage the screening process; and what some of the wider social, ethical and legal implications of screening might be.

The symposium will feature talks from authors of papers in the book, including Janina Kehr of the University of Zurich, Professor David Armstrong, Dr Stuart Hogarth and Dr Alex Faulkner, of King's College,

London, Dr Nete Schwennesen, of the Steno Health Promotion Centre, Denmark, Professor Stefan Timmermans, UCLA, and Professor Alison Pilnick of the University of Nottingham.

It will also feature a panel discussion with key figures in the field of medical screening, including Dr Anne Mackie, Director of the UK National Screening Committee, Dr Margaret McCartney, GP, author and healthcare policy blogger, and Dr Hazel Thornton, Independent Citizen Advocate for Quality in Research and Healthcare.

The symposium received funding from the Foundation for the Sociology of Health and Illness.

Dr Armstrong said: "We think the symposium will be a really nice opportunity to open up the discussion about the sociology of medical screening to a wider range of people. We want to have a wider discussion with key stakeholders such as healthcare policy makers, clinicians and patients, as well as fellow academics.

"One of the questions is – just because we can do something, does that mean we should do it and, if so, what's the right way to do it? This issue is coming to the fore at the moment in relation to mammography screening for breast cancer. Screening is not diagnosis – there are both possible benefits and costs. People may screen positive but have nothing wrong with them."

The conference will be held at the University's John Foster Hall, Manor Road, Oadby, on September 4 from 10.30am.

**More information:** The collection was originally published as an edition of the Sociology of Health and Illness journal, available online at: [eu.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTit ... ctCd-1118231783.html](http://eu.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTit...ctCd-1118231783.html)

Provided by University of Leicester

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