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BODY AND MEDICINE

KAI Shy-Tyng (National Chi Nan University)

Women Who Cannot Sleep: A Narrative Research of Insomnia among Middle-age Women in Taiwan

Insomnia has become a serious public health problem in Taiwan. According to statistic data, Taiwanese spend over 1,000 billion Taiwan dollars (about 32 billion USD.) each year on solving insomnia problem. Public health report also shows that insomnia is getting worse and troubles all ages of people, among them middle age women mostly disturbed. The age and gender gap should have cultural connotations, given insomnia's special mind and bodily dysfunctional combination. In this article, I aim to explore the underlying dimensions beyond patients' sleeping problem. I think they have pretty much to do with the societal milieu, especially in the case of middle age women. To this end, taking cue from the eminent medical anthropologist Arthur Kleinman's idea, I specifically look into patient's narrative in that illness narrative combines the social and the personal, the body and the mind. Kleinman's insights, among others, inspire researchers focusing on patients' explanatory model, within which women's self values accommodate, also contradict, the culture ideals. With mini-ethnography in mind, in Kleinman's model, this article reconstructs middle-age female patients' illness narratives based upon a research conducted in the third biggest city in Taiwan, Taichung. Narrative analysis would reveal that the prevalent insomnia is in fact a symptom of contemporary gender ideal in Taiwan and its discontent.

WANG Tingfei (Nanjing University)

Disciplinary Bodies Made by Groups: A Case Study of Weight Watchers in Nanjing

In consumer society, bodies turn into consumer goods as well, and weight-loss program is a most popular business among them. Based on the writer's self experience in Weight Watchers, it can be showed that group interaction is more effective in weight-loss program when compared with other external forces. In Weight Watchers, members normally have two kinds of group interaction: one is among the members themselves, and the other concerns with the member's own social network. Such support network is now prevalent in western societies due to their Christian traditions. Though lack such a culture background, it seems that group interaction also works well in China. This article examines the operations of those support networks in Weight Watchers in Nanjing, and based on that study, this article reveals how group interaction helps Weight Watchers' members build their disciplinary bodies.

OUYANG Jie (Sun Yat-Sen University)

Kidney Transplantation, Body and Culture

Kidney Transplantation is this generation's technological achievement, reflecting disease, culture, political economy, and social practices. From the angle of Body theory, I learned how the person with kidney transplants to understand their bodies. Within Chinese society which is affected by body-mind dualistic western medicine and traditional holistic Chinese medicine, how personal identity is constructed. Based on the fieldwork by two transplant hospital in Kunming, I interviewed more than 40 persons and observed the difficulties, inconsistencies and solutions during kidney transplantation, and then pointed out that: organ transplants caused the changing of their body-view, the person with organ transplants needed adapt the kidney transplants in both physiological and cultural ways, and in addition, they would reconstruct their social status and relationship and try to return to society successfully. During this process, the body is transformed from a biological, individual organism to a social, cultural, and political economy object. As an individual medical technological advancement, organ transplantation is linked to the knowledge power, ultimately is incorporated into globalization.

YUAN Changgeng (Minzu University of China)

The Metaphor of B-ultrasonic Examination

This thesis, based on the ethnographical materials of two minority villages in Yunnan, is a critical observation on the application of B-ultrasonic technology in local context. As originated in western medical culture, B-ultrasonic was introduced to China as a significant symbol of superior public health service. Being widely used in both prenatal diagnosis and family planning, it represents not only a promotion of healthy service but also a blueprint developed for "good life" in future and its authority is still unquestionable in official discourse. By presenting its adhibition in those villages, however, this thesis demonstrates that the understandings on this new medical technology vary from different stakeholders. The local residents, most of which are Dai and Jingpo, have been reinterpreted the meanings involved with the application of B-ultrasonic potentially in daily practice hitherto. Different from the expectation of government and international organizations, their understanding on B-ultrasonic are an immixture of traditional health view and the influence of contemporary medical culture. B-ultrasonic technology that corresponds to the "metaphor" in post-modern philosophy reveals the complex interactions between minority culture, communism tradition, and western culture. In this sense, it is essential to understand the unique cultural situation and power structure in target communities.