

CENTRE FOR THE HISTORY OF MEDICINE SEMINAR SERIES 2012-2013

Tuesday, 5 February 2013 (Week 5)
5.00 pm – Ramphal Building Room R.014



Dr Rupert Whitaker

(Founder and Chairman of the Tuke Institute, Co-founder of the Terrence Higgins Trust & Honorary Fellow of Warwick CHM)

'Translating history into practice: from physician-centred to patient-centred medicine'

Health-services have developed over the centuries from a privatised, physician-centred model of medicine. Following its struggle to adapt to an evidentiary, 'scientific' framework, medicine itself expanded greatly in the 20th century to encompass multiple medical professions and foci. However, even today, little has actually changed and current health-service-systems are still based on a physician-centred model. With the emerging challenges to health-services, especially in pandemic and chronic conditions such as HIV, it has become clear that the physician-centred model is no longer fit-for-purpose and governments are struggling with vision for the future. One key element of the future's envisioned health-services is 'patient-centredness', the natural antithesis of physician-centredness. Where did this come from as a proposed solution and how is it defined? How would it cure the ailments affecting health-services today? What are the risks from historical interests to the integrity and potential efficacy of this concept in its operationalisation? This seminar will explore aspects of the development of the relevant concepts, the relevance of social movements and patient-empowerment – particularly in HIV and the USA – and some solutions to the current British and American governments' efforts to progress from the legacy of the physician-centred model of medicine towards true health-services.



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