



Kat Smith is a Professor of Public Health Policy at the University of Edinburgh. Over the past ten years, her main research focus has been on analysing policies that impact on public health and on understanding how academics, corporations and advocacy organisations all seek to influence these policies. She is particularly interested in policies affecting health inequalities. Her research draws attention to the role that different genres of ideas (as opposed to evidence) play in shaping policy decisions, to the various ways in which policy shapes research (as well as vice versa) and to the methods and strategies large corporations use to influence policies affecting health outcomes. Kat is currently Co-Director of SKAPE (Centre for Science, Knowledge and Policy at Edinburgh) and Co-Editor-in-Chief of the interdisciplinary journal Evidence & Policy. In 2014, she was awarded a Philip Leverhulme Prize for Sociology and Social Policy, awarded "to recognise the achievement of outstanding researchers whose work has already attracted international recognition and whose future career is exceptionally promising."

«Learning from efforts to reduce health inequalities in the UK»

The links between socioeconomic deprivation and poor health have been extensively studied in the UK and, since 1997, there have been multiple efforts to develop evidence-informed policy solutions. This talk will explore why, despite explicit efforts to employ evidence in developing policy responses, the UK's efforts to reduce health inequalities has remained limited. Drawing on over a hundred interviews with policymakers and researchers and others, the talk will argue that this limited success can be partly attributed to widely-held assumptions that public opinion is unsupportive of many of the policy responses to health inequalities that researchers support. It will reflect on how this assumption has triggered innovative attempts to engage the public in discussions about health inequalities and briefly consider some examples. Next, the talk will draw on the following three sources to explore public views on health inequalities and potential policy responses: (1) a meta-ethnography of qualitative research exploring lay understandings of health inequalities; (2) a series of citizens' juries undertaken by the speaker in Glasgow, Liverpool and Manchester (undertaken in July 2016); and (3) a 2016 national survey, also undertaken by the speaker. Taken together, the results pose a significant challenge to current assumptions about both public understandings of the social determinants of health inequalities and public support for the kinds of policy responses that most researchers working in this field support. The talk will close by arguing that more deliberative, solution orientated public conversations about health inequalities are now required.

Join the seminar on Thursday, 25 April 2019 at 4:00 pm in room 324!