

COVID Research Across Borders

30 March 2022

We present new covid research from experts at the University of Exeter and Istanbul Medeniyet University, across a range of disciplines including medical sociology, anthropology, philosophy, history and public health.

This workshop is part of a new partnership in research and education across both Universities and will be held as a virtual event.

We invite participants from across both universities and beyond.

10.00 – 10.15	Welcome Addresses
	<p>Professor Sadrettin Pençe Dean, Istanbul Medeniyet University, Medical School</p> <p>Professor Gareth Stansfield Acting Dean, University of Exeter, College for Social Sciences & International Studies</p> <p>Professor Christine Hauskeller Philosopher, Director of Global Engagement, Sociology, Philosophy and Anthropology</p>

Session I	
10.15 - 10.30	<p>Contact tracing (filiation) in COVID-19: The example of Istanbul with what we have learnt from the measles outbreak Professor Işıl Maral, <i>Istanbul Medeniyet University, Public Health</i></p>
10.30 - 10.45	<p>Legal Regimes Under Pandemic Conditions: A Comparative Anthropology Dr. Geoffrey Hughes, <i>University of Exeter, Anthropology</i></p>
10.45 – 11.15	Panel Discussion

Session II	
11.15 – 11.30	<p>Silent Sources of the History of Epidemics in the Islamic World: Literature on Plague (Ṭā'ūn) Treatises Dr. Mustakim Arıcı, <i>Istanbul Medeniyet University, Philosophy</i></p>
11.30 – 11.45	<p>Remembering and Forgetting the COVID-19 Pandemic in Britain Professor David Tollerton, <i>University of Exeter, Theology and Religion</i></p>
11.45 - 12.15	Panel Discussion

Session III	
12.15 – 12.30	<p>COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy: A community-based research in Turkey Dr. Hatice İkışık, <i>Istanbul Medeniyet University, Public Health</i></p>
12.30 – 12.45	<p>Race, Ethnicity and Covid-19 in Great Britain Professor Susan Banducci & Dr. Dan Stevens, <i>University of Exeter, Politics</i></p>
12.45– 13.15	Panel Discussion

Abstracts

Işıl Maral: Contact tracing (filiation) in COVID-19: The example of Istanbul with what we have learnt from the measles outbreak

Istanbul is a city that carries the characteristics of both a metropolis and a megapolis, with its population density and mobility, demographic and socioeconomic structure, and the characteristics of its surrounding geographical area. The activities carried out in this city in terms of the prevention and the control of epidemic diseases can be exemplary to the world. In this talk, I will discuss the impact of the contact tracing (filiation) applied during the increasing measles cases between 2012-13 in Istanbul, in the control of the current COVID-19 pandemic. Terms including contact tracing (filiation) quarantine and isolation that will be used during my talk will be based on the definitions of the World Health Organization. It has been also discussed how the central decisions and the national decisions taken by the Ministry of Health are implemented regionally in Istanbul. Before the detection of the first COVID-19 case in Turkey, as a result of the joint work between the Istanbul Provincial Health Directorate and the Ministry of Health, experiences gained during the measles epidemic such as the software to be used in surveillance paved the way for the initiations that required intersectoral cooperation at an early stage. The successful contact tracing and vaccination, in the face of the increasing number of measles cases in Istanbul between 2012 and 2013, brought about a valuable experience for Covid-19 filiation works, not only for Istanbul but also for the whole of Turkey.

Geoffrey Hughes: Legal Regimes Under Pandemic Conditions: A Comparative Anthropology

As it has spread globally, the pathogen SARS-CoV-2 (known colloquially as the coronavirus) has already caused untold suffering, with more most certainly to come. Yet as the virus afflicts, it has also encountered a range of human responses. With its spread, the virus has become a sort of diagnostic tool that can reveal a lot about any body politic that it happens to enter, highlighting preexisting social dysfunction as well as previously untapped potentialities. Through a comparative focus on the pandemic response in Jordan, I emphasize the role of institutions, state capacity, and political imaginaries in conditioning human responses to the pandemic and, indeed, the course of the pandemic itself.

Mustakim Arıcı: Silent Sources of the History of Epidemics in the Islamic World: Literature on Ṭā'ūn/Plague Treatises

From 1347 onwards, new literature emerged in the Islamic and Western worlds: the Ṭā'ūn [Plague] Treatises. The literature in Islamdom was underpinned by three things: (i) Because the first epidemic was a phenomenon that had been experienced since the birth of Islam, ṭā'ūn naturally occurred on the agenda of hadith sources, prophetic biography, and historical works. This agenda was reflected in the treatises as discussions around epidemics, particularly plague, as well as the fight against disease in general in a religious and jurisprudential framework. (ii) Works aimed at diagnosing the plague and dealing with various aspects of it tried to explain disease on the basis of Galenic-Avicennian medicine within the framework of miasma theory, thus deriving their basis from this medical paradigm. (iii) Finally, the encounter with such a brutal illness prompted a quest for all possible remedies, including the occultist culture. This background shaped the language and content of the treatises at different levels.

This talk first evaluates the modern studies on plague treatises written in the Islamic world. Then, it surveys the Islamic historical sources in order to pin down the meaning they assign to the concepts of *wabā'* [epidemic disease] and *ṭā'ūn* [plague]. Certain medical works that were the resources for medical doctrines and terminology for plague treatises are also evaluated with a focus on these two concepts. Thus, the aim of this survey is to understand the general conception of epidemic disease and plague in the Islamic world before the Black Death (1346-1353). I discuss and analyze the characteristics of the *ṭā'ūn* literature, which constitutes the main subject of the article and present a database on the literature. While the works from the Mamluk and Ottoman periods constitute a continuous tradition in some respects, Ottoman treatises differ from the Mamluk works in terms of certain features, especially content. Although this study touches on the common aspects of the works from the two periods, it instead analyzes this literature with a focus on points where the two traditions diverge.

David Tollerton: Remembering and Forgetting the COVID-19 Pandemic in Britain

Although the COVID-19 pandemic is not yet over, there have already been a wide array of public memorialisation initiatives. Based on an AHRC project that examined these developments in the UK, this presentation will introduce some of the dynamics of remembering and forgetting already becoming apparent. Despite the many organisations encouraging remembrance of the pandemic, I suggest that it is a process that faces difficulties, including the reluctance of the UK government to engage in public mourning, ambiguities over how wide the scope of remembrance should be, the unwieldy quantity of immediate digital responses to events, and the wide variations in how individuals have experienced events. The Influenza pandemic of 1918-19 – which is estimated to have killed more people than the First World War – is poorly remembered public life, and this presentation considers whether our collective consciousness of COVID-19 may have a similar fate if we are unable to instigate public debate on how we best remember.

Hatice İkişik: COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy: A community-based research in Turkey

Aim:

The frequency of vaccine refusal and hesitation, which is associated with many factors, is increasing worldwide. The purpose of this study is to estimate the frequency of vaccine refusal against COVID-19 vaccines and to identify the underlying factors for refusal or hesitation.

Materials and Methods:

This is a cross-sectional study carried out in a district of Istanbul from 25 to 30 December 2020. A sample of people from the ages of 20 to 85 in the district was selected, and a total of 384 people were enrolled. A questionnaire about the COVID-19 vaccine was administered to the participants by phone. The questionnaire consisted of questions about the sociodemographic characteristics of participants and their thoughts about possible COVID-19 vaccines.

Results:

45.3% of the participants were hesitant about getting the COVID-19 vaccine, which was declared appropriate by the Ministry of Health. The rate of those who think that the COVID-19 vaccine will be effective in preventing and controlling the disease was 51.6%. 89.6% of the participants were hesitant about getting their children vaccinated. Those who do not consider COVID-19 disease as a risk to their health were 22.9%, and 32.8% thought that they would be protected from the disease by natural and traditional ways. The median score of the participants' risk perception was 7 (IQR: 6-8; Mean: 6.8; SD: 1.7). The median value of risk perception score of those who accept the vaccine was 6 (IQR: 4-6), while the median value for

those who did not accept the vaccine was 4 (IQR: 4-6) ($P < .01$). Factors affecting vaccine acceptance were determined as the perception of risk (OR: 1.26% 95CI 1.03-1.55) and age (OR: 0.94% 95CI: 0.91-0.98) in logistic regression analysis.

Conclusion:

Half of the participants were hesitant about the COVID-19 vaccines. The success of COVID-19 vaccination programmes largely depends on the public willingness to accept the vaccine.

Susan Banducci & Dan Stevens: *Race, Ethnicity and Covid-19 in Great Britain*

While it has been commonplace to observe that the Covid-19 pandemic has magnified existing inequalities along lines of race and ethnicity (which often align with class), what this actually means and its implications for politics is not clear. In this paper we explore these issues in the context of the pandemic in Great Britain. We focus on differences in the impact of Covid-19, e.g., financial problems, mental health issues, illness and deaths, and how these personal and collective experiences have influenced political evaluations such as trust in government, party identification and voting preferences. Our analysis is based on a four-wave panel survey conducted for us by Opinion Research Business—in July and October 2020, March and May 2021—with a booster sample for those who identify as Black and Asian British in Wave 4 that allows us to make comparisons within these groups as well as comparing these groups to white English, Scottish and Welsh respondents. Preliminary findings show that although Black and Asian British respondents were more likely to have had the virus or to have a family member or friend who had died from the virus, they were less likely to acknowledge the fact that Covid-19 has disproportionately affected the BME community. We explore the reasons for this as well as variation in the impact of such experiences and perceptions on trust in national and local government in Britain.

Please register your interest to join with Ahmet Karakaya : ak624@exeter.ac.uk