

# Evidence in Action: New perspectives on evidence production in contemporary society

**Tuesday, March 31, 2015, University of Sussex**

*Spaces of Evidence* is a global network of scholars, practitioners and activists exploring the intersections of politics, measurement and evidence-based policy in health, development, economics, medicine and beyond. On March 31, we are hosting the International Early Career Researcher Seminar in the ESRC Spaces of Evidence seminar series: Evidence in Action: New perspectives on evidence production in contemporary society. The seminar will take place at the University of Sussex and it will be led by Dr Shadreck Mwale (University of Brighton), Daniela Boraschi (University of Essex) and Philip Sayer (University of Bristol).

In the UK, US and Europe, there is an increasing commitment to an approach to policy that has the stated aim of ensuring that decision-making is well-informed by the best available evidence. In this context, evidence is typically conceptualised as bringing to our attention facts, intended for use in support of a hypothesis, conclusion or a new action. Yet, such an understanding immediately prompts a series of questions regarding the legitimacy of different forms of evidence and their relationship with the complex goals and apparatus of the policy process.

This seminar will bring together researchers with an interest in exploring the motivations for, and consequences of the implementation of this new approach to evidence. Behind the comfortable rhetoric of evidence-based policy lie a host of issues that will be explored, including the implementation of evidence hierarchies, the specification of methodological gold standards and the potentially exclusionary nature of top-down control over acceptable forms of evidence. Above all, there is a need to better understand the realities of contemporary policy and decision-making processes in relation to changing conceptualisations of the relationship between evidence and action.

**The event is funded by the ESRC. For more details, see [www.spacesofevidence.net](http://www.spacesofevidence.net)  
This is an open meeting, but spaces are extremely limited. For further information or to reserve a place, please write to:  
Daniela Boraschi, programme coordinator: [evidence@essex.ac.uk](mailto:evidence@essex.ac.uk)**

<b>9.00</b>	<b>Registration - Freeman Building, The Mooting Room, University of Sussex</b>
9.30	Welcome and Introduction
	<b>Session 1 Hierarchies of Evidence and the Positioning of RCTs as a ‘Gold Standard’</b>
09.40	<b>Ruchi Higham</b> ‘Stem cells on trial: Translation, innovation and the multiple meanings of evidence’. <i>University of York - UK.</i>
10.00	<b>Kevin Donovan</b> ‘The Rise of the Randomistas: Experimentation in Aid’. <i>University of Michigan - USA.</i>
<b>10.20</b>	<b>Question &amp; Answer</b>
<b>11.00</b>	<b>Coffee Break</b>
11.20	<b>Sarah Willis</b> ‘Critical review of economic evaluations interventions for prostate cancer care’. <i>London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine - UK.</i>
11.40	<b>Fadhila Mazanderani</b> ‘Experimenting with Experience: Internet Use, Patient Activism and the Production of New Forms of Evidence’. <i>The University of Edinburgh - UK.</i>
<b>12.00</b>	<b>Question &amp; Answer</b>
<b>12.30</b>	<b>Lunch Break</b>
	<b>Session 2 Evidence-Based Policy in Institutional Settings</b>
13.30	<b>Brendan Whitty</b> ‘Accommodating Facts: narratives, micro-politics and evidence in a bilateral donor country office’. <i>University of East Anglia - UK.</i>
13.50	<b>William Cook</b> ‘Scripts of Transparency: A dramaturgical analysis of an FSC auditor training course’. <i>Wageningen University - The Netherlands.</i>
14.10	<b>Nele Jensen</b> ‘Paper-chasing global health actors - a history of evidence-based health policy at the WHO’. <i>Goldsmiths, University of London - UK.</i>
<b>14.30</b>	<b>Question &amp; Answer</b>
<b>15.00</b>	<b>Coffee Break</b>
15.20	<b>Stefanie Ettelt</b> ‘Scientific evidence, politics and law: The case of hospital minimum volumes in Germany.’ <i>London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine - UK.</i>
15.40	<b>Andy Guise</b> ‘Does evidence based practice exclude NGOs?’. <i>University of California - USA.</i>
<b>16.00</b>	<b>Question &amp; Answer</b>
<b>16.30</b>	<b>Closing Remarks</b>