

4S 2017 CFP: Making Medical Innovation Ethical

August 30 – September 2, 2017

Boston, Massachusetts, USA

Organized by the Science, Technology, and Medicine section of the Society for Medical Anthropology

New medical technologies often challenge and remake frameworks for evaluating the ethics of biomedical procedures. This panel, organized by the Science, Technology, and Medicine section of the Society for Medical Anthropology, seeks to deepen the conversation about what happens when new medical tools come up against existing ethical sensibilities. While many experts, patient groups, and media observers believe that medical innovation will open up human bodies to longer, better life spans and a wider variety of sensations and experiences, other constituencies worry about how new gadgets perpetuate patterns of unequal access to medical care. What social, political, and technical understandings of technological innovation underwrite such orientations, and what other responses are possible? Furthermore, to what extent is the development of such technologies the purview of elites, and to what extent do women, people with disabilities, people of color, queer and gender non-conforming people, people at the margins of the economy, and experts situated beyond established global centers of power actively intervene upon their design and use? What is at stake when bodies saved or enhanced by emerging technologies encounter established ethical norms in the laboratory, the research clinic, the maker space, the hospital, and the street? What sorts of controversies about evidence of efficacy and responsible use allow us to witness the (re)configuration of ethical frameworks for new medical technologies? We invite papers with an ethnographic grounding focused on any geographic location that explore the diverse uses, effects, and conditions of development of medical technologies.

Please submit abstracts of 250 words or less to Elena Sokolova (elena.k.sokolova@gmail.com), Tanja Ahlin (tanja.ahlin@gmail.com), and Danya Glabau (danya.glabau@gmail.com) by noon EST on February 19, 2017 to ensure time for review and submission of the panel.