



UCLA Programs in Medical Classics

2003 - 2004

UCLA Programs in Medical Classics is a series of presentations designed to enhance an appreciation of the links among famous medical writings, clinical practice, basic research, and humanistic scholarship. Six times a year these meetings bring together a convivial group of individuals of scholarly tastes—both from the community and from UCLA faculty, students, and staff—for a lecture and an opportunity to discuss and examine texts and topics that embody the history of advances in medicine, as well as the relations of medicine to broader cultural settings.

<http://www.library.ucla.edu/biomed/his/medicalclassics.html>

Tuesday, 13 January 2004, 6:00 p.m.

Experimenting with Heroin: The Hidden Assumptions of Randomized Clinical Trials

Trudy Dehue, Ph.D.

Professor of Theory and History of Psychology, University of Groningen

Introduction by Theodore Porter, Ph.D.

Professor of History, UCLA

Various European countries and Canada are currently conducting or planning randomized clinical trials (RCTs) with heroin users. The aim is to find out whether or not provision of heroin, more so than methadone, improves severe abusers' physical and psychosocial condition. The first full-fledged RCT with heroin-maintenance was conducted in The Netherlands from 1996 to 2002, and is currently advertised as a success in international scientific and political circuits. However, was the Dutch trial really as smooth and successful as its proponents claim? Dr. Dehue closely studied the vicissitudes of the Dutch trial as part of a larger historical and philosophical research project on the assumptions of RCTs. Whereas she does not contest the benefits of heroin-maintenance, she challenges the international status of RCTs with heroin-maintenance as the royal way to neutral results.

Dr. Dehue recently contributed a chapter on "The History of Social Experiments: From Disturbing Events to Social Science Research Designs" to the *Encyclopedia of Social Science Measurement* (Academic Press, in press).

The January program is co-sponsored by the UCLA Neuroscience History Archives
(<http://www.NeuroscienceArchives.org>)

An optional dinner with the speakers, at \$22.00 per person, will take place in the Faculty Center about 7:30 pm. A reservation is required for dinner; please call the History & Special Collections Division of the Louise Darling Biomedical Library at (310) 825-6940 to make a reservation.

An abridged form of a classic text related to the evening's lecture will be distributed by snailmail to those persons who request it in advance. To request this related text (the lecture itself is not recorded or transcribed) or more information, please send Teresa Johnson <tgj@library.ucla.edu> an e-mail, including your name and address, with the words "**Medical Classics Program: January 2004 Reading**" in the subject line; or call the History & Special Collections Division at (310) 825-6940.