

RADICAL STATISTICS

2011 Annual Conference

'Cuts & Corporations'

Saturday, 26th February 2011

The Heart Centre, Bennett Rd, Headingley, Leeds LS6 3HN

9:30 am **Registration**

10:00 **Welcome**

10:05 **Unkindest Cuts: Analysing the effects by gender and age**
Jay Ginn, Institute of Gerontology, Kings College London, &
Susan Himmelweit, Open University and Women's Budget Group

The Coalition government claims that its measures to reduce the financial-sector-created deficit are designed to be 'fair': distributing the pain across the whole of society. I argue that vulnerable groups will suffer the worst effects of the package of cuts and tax changes, focussing on how older people and women are affected.

10:40 **From Witney to Wigan: How national changes to welfare benefit rules have a differential impact on local communities**
Alan Franco, Welfare Rights Manager

The transition from the language of 'social security' to 'welfare dependency' has been accompanied by recent announcements of significant cuts in the levels of welfare benefits and tax credits. These are typically portrayed as 'targeting help on those most in need'. However a geographical analysis of their differential impact on communities suggests that significant disinvestment in Britain's most impecunious communities is underway.

11:15 **break**

11:30 **The distributional impact of the 2010 Spending Review**
Howard Reed, Landman Economics

This paper attempts to set out the value of the benefits we receive from public services, using a new model of the distribution of public spending across households in the UK. We use this analysis to estimate the losses to households as a result of the cuts in spending announced in the October 2010 Spending Review, as well as discussing the impact of the fiscal consolidation measures as a whole (that is, including the impact of changes to taxes and benefits).

12:05 pm **Radical Statistics Group annual general meeting**
This is an open AGM to encourage collaborative action. All are welcome to participate

1:00 **Lunch**

2:00 **The detrimental effects of corporate influence on science and technology**

Links between business and science and technology are increasing. Many argue that this is positive for both science and society, but there is growing evidence that the science commercialisation agenda brings with it a wide range of detrimental effects, including bias, conflicts of interest, a narrowing of the research agenda, and misrepresentation of research results. These all can reduce the reliability of statistics based on scientific research. This presentation will present evidence for these effects across five sectors: pharmaceuticals; tobacco; military/defence; oil and gas; and biotechnology. It will also make suggestions for improving the openness, independence and reliability of academic research.

2:35 **The effects of the libel laws on science**
Peter Wilmshurst Consultant Cardiologist, Royal Shrewsbury Hospital

NMT Medical, a US medical device company, is suing me for libel in England after I spoke at a conference in the USA about the results of a clinical trial in which I had been the principal cardiologist and which NMT sponsored. Comments attributed to me were put on a US cardiology website. The website and the journalist are not being sued. The legal action has gone on for 3 years, has been expensive and time consuming. There are other examples of scientists being sued for libel for scientific presentations and research publications. This should be a concern for scientists, statisticians and the public, restricting as it does scientific communication.

3:10 **break**

3:25 **Redefining wealth, redefining progress**
Victoria Johnson, New Economics Foundation

NEF (the New Economics Foundation) is a leading independent think-and-do tank working towards the Great Transition of the economy to one that puts people and the planet first. Central to this aim is redefining wealth and the development of alternative measures of progress. These are contrary to 'cold' indicators like GDP or methods like standard Cost Benefit Analysis that fail to consider ecological life-support systems or what really matters to society. This talk will explore how nef is developing alternative indicators and using them as a literacy tool to demonstrate the failings of the current economic paradigm.

4:00 **Activity workshops**

The conference will divide into groups, as previously done, to discuss topics which can lead to activity after the conference. Participants suggest topics and choose the group to attend. Topics so far include: "Doing impact assessments of government policy on gender and other inequalities" led by the Women's Budget Group, "Cuts to Government Social Research Budgets and Ongoing Projects since May 2010: Increasing the Evidence Deficit?" led by Simon Tanner, "Libel in science" led by Peter Wilmhurst, and "Indicators of social progress", led by Victoria Johnson. Others to follow.

5:00 **Close**

Not only a conference. Join us for:

Friday night social gathering: Citrus Café Bar, 11 North Lane, Headingley, LS6 3HG, from 7.30pm. Food will be available to order until 9.30pm. Quiz night: bring a multiple choice question, or answer ours.

Saturday evening meal: 6:30 pm at the Olive Tree Greek restaurant, 74 Otley Rd LS6 4BA. Meet before at the Arcadia pub, the Arndale Centre 34 Otley Rd, LS6 2UE

Sunday morning walk: Meet at 10:15 am at the Heart Centre Bennett Rd. LS6 3HN for a circular walk, incorporating the Meanwood Valley & the Hollies, along pleasant byways of Headingley. A dry alternative is available if raining (the museum and galleries in Leeds centre). Further details at the conference.

£20 members / £30 non-members / £35 non-members including membership.

Subtract £10 from each for student/low-waged (self-defined).

Book at www.radstats.org.uk/conf2011/