

Bibliotek for Læger

A journal devoted to medical history, ethics, philosophy and clinical theory, founded in 1809

Christian Graugaard:

In the shadow of diagnoses. Thematic introduction.

Bibl Læger 2006;198:3–12.

This introductory article presents sociological and meta-scientific perspectives on social deviance. The moral dimension of medical science and practice is stressed, and doctors' schismatic position between societal needs and the autonomy of individual patients is put forward. Subsequently, the role of the medical profession in producing subversive "strangers" and constructing social "truth" is discussed. Further, constructionist, interactionist and anti-psychiatric viewpoints on normality, deviance, diagnostic procedures and medical knowledge are presented. Finally, the authors and articles of the special issue are briefly introduced.

Peter Scharff Smith:

From the modern penitentiary to Guantánamo. Solitary confinement, doctors, treatment of prisoners, and interrogation methods from 1830 to present time.

Bibl Læger 2006;198:13–37.

The article takes a closer look at an area of penal policy, which has brought together the disciplines of criminology and medical science on several levels during the recent two centuries. The main focus is on the use of solitary confinement in connection with imprisonment, pre-trial detention, and interrogations. Initially, the breakthrough of the modern penitentiary in the 19th century and the role of prison doctors in assessing the effects of the new isolation regimes are described. Subsequently, the use of solitary confinement during the cold war is discussed as well as the role of psychological and medical research in establishing new methods of interrogation involving the use of sensory deprivation. Finally, the use of solitary confinement and the role of physicians in connection with the current use of detention and interrogation practices in the US war on terrorism are discussed.

Merete Bøge Pedersen:

Tempting outcasts. On common prostitutes in the 19th century.

Bibl Læger 2006;198:38–57.

The subject of the article is the regulation of prostitution in Denmark in 1874–1906. The Act on Measures to Combat the Spread of Venereal Infection of April 10th 1874 was passed on the basis of a growing fear of venereal diseases. The Act of 1874 made it possible for the police to enlist women as common prostitutes and thereby subjecting them to weekly control and to different measures of punishment. The article presents the themes discussed in the prostitution debate and illustrates how complex the sanitary control system was.

Birgit Kirkebæk:

Societal dislike and medical diagnostics. The women's institution on Sprogø Island in 1923–1961.

Bibl Læger 2006;198:58–79.

The article is based on data derived from the archives of an institution aimed at women of "loose and promiscuous character and low intelligence": Sprogø Island, Denmark. The analysis focuses on the professional narratives of the interned women, particularly the diagnoses and treatment applied, as they emerge from the archival material. Analyses of the case sheets highlight the theories of eugenics, prostitution, and poverty combined with the chief physicians' more

practical and socio-hygienic interpretation of the therapeutic purpose of the internment. The case sheets depict the dangers of the "the Sprogø girl" in terms of moral infection, social burdens and venereal diseases – and they are not documents about the individual girl herself. And they illustrate how medical science and normative political practice can – and often will – go hand in hand.

Edith Mandrup Rønn:

"Dear Mr. Registrar!" A woman with two diagnoses

– the story of a life. Bibl Læger 2006;198:80–99.

Most Danish institutions and hospitals for mentally ill and deficient persons were built from the middle of the 19th century to 1930. In the beginning, people holding a diagnosis of mental deficiency were routinely admitted to hospitals and later moved to the newly built institutions. Therefore, it is possible to find records of the same person from both institutions and hospitals. The article deals with such a case and demonstrates the differences in attitudes towards mentally ill and mentally deficient persons. The woman in question was brought up in a strict religious atmosphere, and she was excluded from her own culture due to religious disagreements. The author argues for a micro-historical approach when studying the marginalization of mentally handicapped persons, by using all possible sources, especially those produced by the patient. By observing the surrounding environment from the viewpoint of the patient you get a better overview when trying to analyze the existing discourses.

Benny Lihme:

Mad man on the right track. Christian Bonde

– a rebellious patient on the run from medical power.

Bibl Læger 2006;198:100–18.

The article presents the life story of Christian Bonde, who was diagnosed as antisocial and mentally retarded in his early childhood and confined to hospitals and institutions for 26 years of his life. Bonde, however, was a vital and compassionate social being and far from retarded. He survived all humiliations, and the latter part of his life he struggled for the rights of mentally ill and disabled. Subsequently, he became a Danish institution in the fight against medical narrow-mindedness and disgraceful power abuse.

Preben Brandt:

Homeless among houses. On the blind eye of the health system.

Bibl Læger 2006;198:119–36.

The number of homeless people in Denmark is unknown, but we know that approximately 8000 persons use institutions for homeless people every year. So homelessness exists in a welfare society, and it is evident that homelessness, poverty, and bad health are closely linked. Even though alcoholism, drug abuse, and mental illness are often claimed to be the main causes of homelessness, psychosocial maltreatment during childhood must also be seen as a major risk factor. Homeless people are known to suffer from a variety of physical and mental diseases. However, the health system has severe difficulties establishing the needed communicating between "them" and "us". Homeless people are rarely seen by medical professionals, and the vast amount of health problems in this group therefore remain invisible to the public health sector.