

RESEARCH PROJECT

Project name: Measuring Global Health: An international workshop on the political, social and ethical aspects of quantification practices and metrics in global health.

Description: Metrics and quantification practices permeate contemporary global health efforts. So, the consultation of large epidemiological surveys like the Global Burden of Disease is inescapable when identifying new global health problems. Similarly, reference to cost-effectiveness metrics is unavoidable when deciding what health interventions to fund. And, most global health initiatives are built around numerical targets and strict accountability procedures. This two-day international workshop brings epidemiologists and public health experts together with social scientists and historians to examine and discuss across disciplines the political, social and ethical aspects of these metrics and quantification practices in global health.

The workshop in particular focuses on the following themes:

- **The Production of Global Health Metrics:** When exploring how metrics are produced, the workshop will examine not only the new forms of expertise and labour associated with quantification but also the political and moral discourses, the ICT infrastructure, the institutions and the statistical techniques that make quantification possible.
- **The Politics of Global Health Metrics:** The workshop will explore what things are counted, how classificatory systems and indicators are constructed and, importantly, what is excluded in the process of counting and why. It will also study the sometime uneasy alliances between international experts and local investigators, the places in which the counting is done and the global flows of funds, materials and data between them.
- **The Consumption of Global Health Metrics:** The workshop will examine what types of metrics have political traction and how this depends on the audience, time and place. It will also explore how the form, materiality and authorship of data impacts on its capacity to travel. Moreover, it will analyse how metrics are used and transform the way health advocacy and management is done at different scales, from the international to the local.

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Aims: to examine and discuss across disciplines the political, social and ethical aspects of these metrics and quantification practices in global health.

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Partners: the Department of Social Studies of Medicine at McGill University and the Department of Geography at Queen Mary University of London