University of Birmingham

Dr Nicola Gale

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About

Nicola Gale, MA, PhD, is a health sociologist, with a track record in both single-discipline sociological research and interdisciplinary health research where she has brought her sociological perspective and skills to projects in fields of health services research, public health, primary care, community-led and complementary health care. Dr Gale is committed to theoretically-informed empirical work and to ensuring that findings are applied to improve practice.

Theoretical interests:

- Embodiment
- Social networks and communities of practice
- Resilience

Empirical interests:

- Healthcare knowledge and practice (both professional and lay health workers)
- Complementary and alternative medicine
- Community-led (asset-based) health services
- Self-management, prevention, recovery and resilience

Methodological interests:

- Qualitative methodologies, particularly place-based and embodied empirical methods such as ethnography, shadowing, 'situated interviewing' (see Gale and Sultan 2013) and auto-ethnography.
- Qualitative meta-synthesis
- Patient/user involvement in health research and care, including experience-based co-design
- Public engagement in social science

Qualifications

- PhD Sociology, University of Warwick (2007)
- MA Sociological Research in Health Care (2002)
- BA (Hons) Politics and Sociology, University of Warwick (2001)

Biography

Nicola grew up in London, UK, and then spent her University years at Warwick University. She developed an early interest in sociology and social policy in the health field. After completing her Masters, she secured an ESRC doctoral fellowship to complete her PhD at Warwick on the training of complementary and alternative medical practitioners. The thesis, entitled ‘Knowing the body and embodying knowledge’ contributed to the fields of embodied sociology, the sociology of knowledge and the sociology of health and healthcare.

She moved back to London, and worked at the University of Westminster, teaching Public Health and taking up a Research Fellow position in the iCAM Unit (integrating complementary and alternative medicine), where she worked on a number of projects related to clinical governance and safety in CAM practice. During this time, she also held a Visiting Lecturer position at Birkbeck, University of London, where she taught Health Policy. In 2009, she moved back to the Midlands, to take up a Research Fellow position at the School of Health and Population Sciences at the University of Birmingham, working for the NIHR Collaborations for Leadership in Applied Health Research and Care (CLARHC) for Birmingham and the Black Country. She was the lead for the qualitative workstreams in four of the CLAHRC themes. At Birmingham, she set up CAMBRA - the Complementary and Alternative Medicine Birmingham Research Alliance, which has members from across the University, local NHS Trust and Third Sector organisations. In January 2013, she moved to the Health Services Management Centre, School of Social Policy, where she is a Lecturer in the Sociology of Healthcare.

Teaching

Postgraduate

Masters in Public Health/Primary Care (College of Medical and Dental Sciences)

- Qualitative Research Methods
- Sociology and Social Policy

Masters in Health Policy and Management (College of Social Sciences)

- Public and User Involvement

Undergraduate

College of Social Sciences

- Sociology of Health and Illness

Postgraduate supervision

Current

- Cathy Shneerson (final year, NIHR funded): Self-management practices of cancer survivors
- Clare Taylor (second year, NIHR funded): Diagnosis and management of heart failure in primary care
- Christine Gowing (second year, self-funded): History of complementary medicine in nursing
- Julie Werrett (first year, self-funded): Evaluation of England's first dedicated LGBT health and wellbeing centre

Completed

- Manbinder Sidhu: self-management of chronic disease in ethnically-diverse communities.
- Rowena Yeats: Staff wellbeing during service redesign

Research

Currently, her main research projects are:

- Exploring how best to promote a culture of research in the NHS (2014)
- Evaluation of cancer surgery services in the UK
- NIHR **Collaborations for Leadership in Applied Health Research and Care (CLAHRC) (http://www.clahrc-bbc.nihr.ac.uk/)** programme in Birmingham and Black Country. She is qualitative lead for four of the themes: service redesign, maternity services, telecare, and prevention of cardiovascular disease. She is also involved in the cross-cutting sociology themes (novel methodologies, health and place, embodiment, lay accounts of illness).
- **Putting embodied knowledge into practice (http://www.esrc.ac.uk/my-esrc/grants/ES.J002828.1/read)**. This is an Economic and Social Research Council funded project investigating the experiences of graduates from complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) training courses. In the absence of established career structures, the project investigates how graduates build a career that is personally and financially sustainable, how they develop their knowledge and skills, including building professional networks, and how they manage their own professional identity in a marginalized profession.
- Regulation and professionalization in CAM. In collaboration with Professor Jean McHale, Director of the Centre for Health Law, Science and Policy, I have been working on a project to re/position the debates on practice, professions and the law in CAM, using interdisciplinary perspectives. We argue that current popular and policy debates are 'stuck' in a polarized and largely asocial discourse, and that an interdisciplinary social science (law, sociology, history, ethics) perspective seeking to introduce nuance and theorize diversity in the field, will provide a much more robust interdisciplinary evidence base for policy and practice in the field. This work has to date been funded by the Wellcome Trust. We have secured a contract with Routledge to publish in their Handbook series: **The Routledge Handbook of Complementary and Alternative Medicine: Perspectives from Social Science and Law (http://www.routledge.com/books/details/9780415818940/)**.

Publications

2015

Brown, H., Hewison, A., Gale, N., Snelling, I. and Shneerson, C. (2015) Every patient a research patient? Evaluating the current state of research in the NHS. **A report for Cancer Research UK, May 2015. (https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/sites/default/files/cruk_every_patient_may2015_web.pdf?utm_source=twitter_crukpolicy&utm_medium=cruksocialmedia&utm_campaign=CRUKpolicy)**

Shneerson, C. L. and Gale, N. K. (2015) Using Mixed Methods to Identify and Answer Clinically Relevant Research Questions, *Qualitative Health Research* 25(6): 845 – 856. **doi: 10.1177/1049732315580107 (http://qhr.sagepub.com/content/25/6/845?etoc)**

2014

Gale, N K (2014), How can you make a career as a complementary therapist?, Dissemination Report, 'Putting Embodied Knowledge Into Practice' (ES/J002828/1). Birmingham: Health Services Management Centre, University of Birmingham (/Documents/college-social-sciences/social-policy/HSMC/publications/2014/how-can-you-make-a-career-as-a-complementary-therapist.pdf).

Brown, H., Ellins, J., Jackson, O., Gale, N., Sawbridge, Y. and Morton, D. (2014) An evaluation of cancer surgery services in the UK. A report for Cancer Research UK by the Health Services Management Centre, University of Birmingham, and ICF – GHK consulting, February 2014. (/Documents/college-social-sciences/social-policy/HSMC/publications/2014/policy-cruk-cancer-surgery-services-feb14.pdf)

Gale, N., Shapiro, J., McLeod, H. S.T., Redwood, S. and Hewison, A. (2014) Patients-people-place: developing a framework for researching organizational culture during health service redesign and change, *Implementation Science*. **doi:10.1186/s13012-014-0106-z (http://www.implementationscience.com/content/9/1/106)**

Lord, L. & Gale, NK (2014) Subjective Experience or Objective Process: understanding the gap between values and practice for involving patients in designing patient-centred care. ***Journal of Health Organization and Management, 28 (6) (http://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/abs/10.1108/JHOM-08-2013-0160)***.

Gale, N. (2014) The Sociology of Traditional, Complementary and Alternative Medicine, *Sociology Compass*, 8: 805–822. doi: 10.1111/soc4.12182

Shneerson, C., Barlett, D., Lord, J. and Gale, N. (2014) Supporting Healthy Ageing: training multi-disciplinary healthcare students. European Journal of Integrative Medicine, Vol. 6 (1): 104 – 111. (http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1876382013002114)

2013

Gale, N., Heath, G., Cameron, E., Rashid, S., Redwood, S. (2013) Using the Framework Method For the Analysis of Qualitative Data in Multi-disciplinary Health Research. BMC Medical Research Methodology, 13: 117 (http://www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2288/13/117)

Hewison A, Gale NK, Yeats R, Shapiro J (2013) 'An evaluation of staff engagement programmes in four National Health Service Acute Trusts'. *Journal of Health Organisation and Management*, Vol. 27 (1): 85 – 105 (http://eprints.bham.ac.uk/1315/).

Shneerson C, Taskila T, Gale NK, Greenfield S & Chen YF (in press) 'The effect of complementary and alternative medicine on the quality of life of cancer survivors: A systematic review and meta-analyses'. Complementary Therapies in Medicine (http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0965229913000885)
.

Gale, NK and Sultan, H. (2013) Telehealth as 'peace of mind': embodiment, emotions and the home as the primary health space for people with chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder. *Health and Place*, 21: 140 – 147.

2012

Gale NK, Marshall T, Bramley G (2012) Starting and staying on preventative medication for cardiovascular disease. Current Opinion in Cardiology. DOI:10.1097/HCO.0b013e328356dae5.

Kenyon S, Jolly K, Hemming K, Ingram L, Gale N, Dann SA, Chambers J, Macarthur C. (2012) Evaluation of Lay Support in Pregnant women with Social risk (ELSIPS): a randomised controlled trial. BMC Pregnancy Childbirth. 12:11 doi:10.1186/1471-2393-12-11

Redwood S, Gale N & Greenfield S (2012) '"You give us Rangoli, we give you talk" - Using an Art-Based Activity to Elicit Data from a Seldom Heard Group', BMC Medical Research Methodology, 12:7 doi:10.1186/1471-2288-12-7

Hewison A, Gale NK, Shapiro J (2012) Co-production in research: some reflections on the experience of engaging practitioners in health research. Public Money & Management. 21(4): 297-302.

2011

Gale NK, Greenfield S, Gill P, Gutridge K, Marshall T (2011) Patient and general practitioner attitudes to taking medication to prevent cardiovascular disease after receiving detailed information on risks and benefits of treatment: a qualitative study, BMC Family Practice 12:59, doi:10.1186/1471-2296-12-59

Gale NK (2011) 'From body-talk to body-stories: educating for body work in complementary and alternative medicine', Sociology Of Health And Illness Special Edition/Monograph, Body Work in Health and Social Care: Critical Themes, Future Agendas, 33(2): 237–251.

2010

Gale NK (2010) 'The embodied ethnographer: journeys in a healthcare sub-culture' International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 9(2): 206-223.

2009

Gale, NK (2009) 'Promoting patient-practitioner partnership in clinical training: a critical evaluation' Learning in Health and Social Care, 8(1): 13-21.

Seers H, Gale NK, Paterson C, Cooke H, Tuffrey V & Polley MJ (2009) Combined analysis of qualitative and quantitative data from patients using complementary therapies in cancer support care. Supportive Care in Cancer, 17(9): 1159-1167.

Expertise

- Patient experience of illness
- Use of complementary therapies
- Public involvement in health care

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