

COLLOQUIUM

Troubling Patient Choice: An Auto-ethnographic Account of Made Care Work

Dr. Erica Hua Fletcher – Lecturer at University of California, Irvine

The ethics of involuntary psychiatric treatment have long been debated among



psychiatrists, bioethicists, and psychiatric user/survivors. In more recent years, Mad Studies scholars have drawn from feminist and disability bioethics to argue for the primacy of patient choice in psychiatric decision-making. I discuss the limits of such arguments from an intersectional and structural perspective, grounded in my own experiences engaging in care work with a family member who often refused mental health treatment. I argue that the rhetoric of patient choice upholds forms of morality and sanity that may fail to consider particular social, economic, and political contexts through which “choice” takes shape and through which care operates.

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Erica Hua Fletcher is a Lecturer in the Department of Anthropology at UC Irvine. Her interdisciplinary scholarship examines the contributions of contemporary mental health patient rights groups' in their efforts to democratize, politicize, and ultimately shape community mental health care in the United States. She graduated from the University of Texas Medical Branch's Institute of the Medical Humanities in 2015; since then, she served a visiting assistant professor at the University of Houston's Honors College and as the Zorich Fellow in Mental Health Policy at the Hope and Healing Center & Institute in Houston, Texas.

