**Changing academic life: The hazards and hopes of emotional labour in researching academia.**

This paper will draw on two qualitative studies exploring disability and chronic health in academic careers. While efforts to support disabled students remain imperfect, accessibility initiatives to support disabled *staff* are more sparse. Little academic research has examined the lived experiences of disabled academic staff, although some work suggests that disabled academics face barriers to career entry and progression, and are under-emphasized within broader understandings of inclusion.

This paper will present empirical work on the lived experiences of disabled academics (study 1) and those experiencing menstruation, menopause and gynaecological health conditions (study 2). For study 1, data was collected from approximately 60 academics, or former academics, working across the full range of academic disciplines and career stages. Thematic analysis of interview and email/google docs responses to interview questions revealed several challenges faced by disabled academics. Participants identified rigid funding schemes, ignorance or hostility from colleagues/line managers, and the levels of bureaucracy involved in securing ‘reasonable adjustments’ as barriers to full participation in academic life. For some participants, these barriers had precluded remaining in academia or employment more generally. Being disabled by social and environmental factors, combined with managing an ‘impairment’ or chronic health problem, particularly ones related to reasonable adjustments, led participants to suggest they have at least two full time jobs: being an academic and being disabled (Sang, 2017a).

For study 2, a qualitative survey approach was taken, to collect data from over 600 academics who experience menstruation, menopause and gynaecological health conditions. The data reveal similar difficulties navigating the rigid career, teaching and funding structures identified by participants in study 1. Respondents reported difficulties managing blood in the workplace (blood work), for example, lack of facilities for disposal or cleaning of menstrual products, menstrual flow leaking onto clothes and chairs and lack of access to toilets (Sang, 2017b). Non-binary respondents reported similar difficulties, compounded by tensions between gender identity and the presence of menstrual blood.

The presentation will focus on three key aspects of both studies. Firstly, a brief summary of the findings. The presentation will then move to consider the emotional labour undertaken by the lead author in undertaking the research and dissemination of the findings. Second, attention will be drawn to the hazards and opportunities of expressing emotions related to fieldwork, while academia prizes ‘objectivity’ and dispassionate engagement with upsetting topics (Sang, 2017c). Finally, the presentation will highlight how the two studies have been used by the lead researcher as activism within and outwith the academy.

Sang, K. (2017a) Disability on Campus <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/features/disability-campus-challenges-faced-and-change-needed> Times Higher Education 18th May, 2017.

Sang, K (2017b) Gynaecological health in academia: many are suffering in silence <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/blog/gynaecological-health-academia-many-are-suffering-silence> Times Higher Education, 16th October 2017.

Sang, K (2017c) Tears on my podium: researching close to home <https://bsapgforum.com/2017/03/30/dr-kate-sang-tears-on-my-podium-researching-close-to-home/comment-page-1/> 30th March, 2017.