

**THIRD INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP ON GENETICS,  
HISTORY AND MEDICINE.**

**BARCELONA, MAY 30-31, 2008**

**'Genetics, History and Public Understanding'**

**Organiser Professor Toine Pieters, Amsterdam**

This highly successful workshop had a different focus from its predecessor in Brno, utilising the opportunity of social scientists being in Barcelona for the joint ESHG/EMPAG meeting immediately following the workshop. Around 60 people attended, from a wide range of backgrounds; the participants list is given on the genmedhist website, along with the programme.

Many of the presentations were primarily of a social science nature, but often with a historical approach and a 'time dimension'. A notable example of this was the presentation by Dr Zhai Xiaomei, leader of the Bioethics Unit at the Peking Union Medical College Department of Social Sciences and Humanities, who outlined the background to the Chinese Maternal and Health Law and the later abandonment of its eugenic aspects. Other important issues addressed included critical bioethical and social analyses of different aspects of reproductive genetics and of pharmacogenetics and technological developments such as microarrays.

A number of the other presentations involved more strictly historical research, including accounts of how population chromosome studies developed in the Edinburgh Medical Research Council Unit in the 1950s and 1960s under Michael Court Brown, and also an overview of how medical genetics and genetic counselling developed in relation to Public Health in the 1930s to 1960s.

This fruitful workshop was accompanied by an enjoyable evening social gathering in Barcelona's old city. Thanks are especially due to Toine Pieters, his Amsterdam colleagues and our local Barcelona hosts, for his hard work in arranging and organising such a valuable programme.

Looking ahead, it is provisionally planned that the fourth workshop in the series will be held prior to the June 2010 ESHG meeting in Goteborg, Sweden, with the theme of 'The Beginnings of Human Molecular Genetics'. Professor Christos Yapijakis, of Athens, has kindly agreed to the principal organiser.