**GROWING A DOCTOR AND 'GROWING' SAFETY: MEDICAL EDUCATION AND RITES OF PASSAGE FOR COMMUNICATING THE 'SACRED THINGS' OF PRACTICE**

**Irene Dudley-Swarbrick\*, Department of Applied Health and Social Care, Edge Hill University, St Helen's Road, Ormskirk, Lancashire.**

Medical education reflects a tribal '*rite of passage'* through which initiates progress to become full members of their community. Medical initiates occupy a liminal space in their community – 'betwixt and between': a doctor, yet not quite a ‘fully formed’ doctor such as a consultant or GP. During the *liminal* *phase* initiates must experience *communication of the sacra* (here the ‘sacred’ things of medical work) in three forms: exhibitions (what is shown), instructions (what is said), and actions (what is done). *Communication of the sacra* is always essential to any 'tribal' initiation, and if this process is incomplete or insufficient, doctors (and in particular those at FY levels 1 and 2) experience anxiety as a result of role ambiguity: being uncertain as to the extent and limits of their role. This paper uses resources from both anthropology and feminist technoscience to suggest some ‘necessary and sufficient conditions’ to ensure communication of the sacra in medical education, and thereby productive and unambiguous participation by doctors-in-training. It concludes by considering the impact on hospital work and patient safety that emerges when this process is either insufficient, absent, or marginalised.

Acknowledgement: This work was supported by the ESRC and MRC as part of an Industrial CASE Studentship