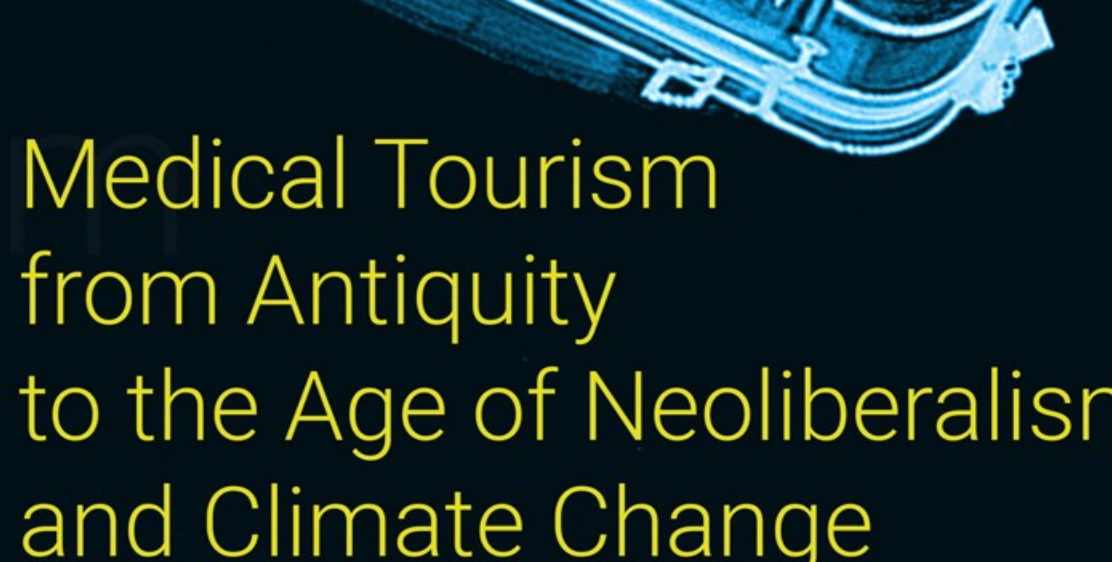


2020  
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**Slow Down.  
Breathe In.  
Get Away.**



Medical Tourism  
from Antiquity  
to the Age of Neoliberalism  
and Climate Change

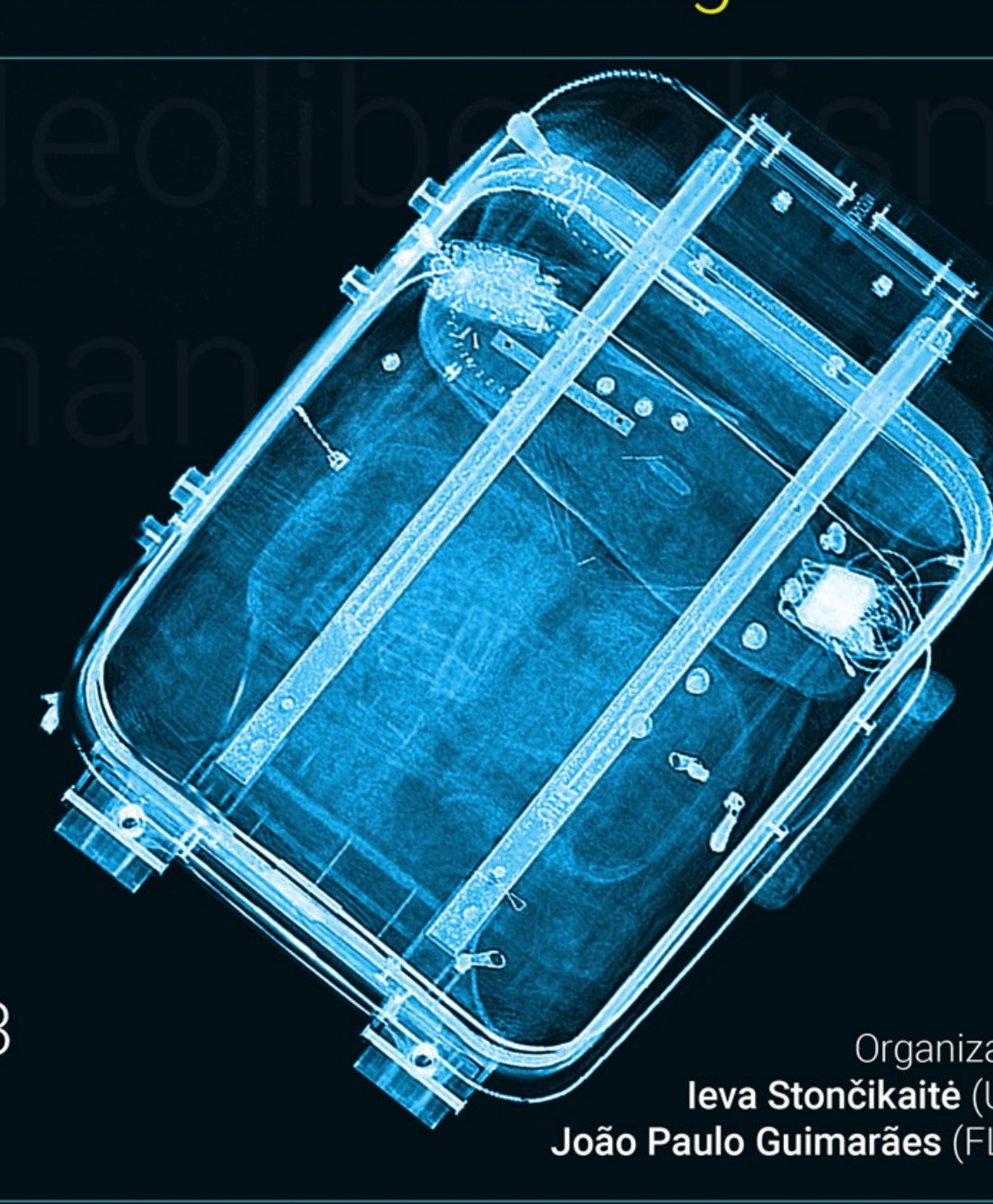


Keynote Speaker  
**Roberta Maierhofer**  
(University of Graz)



30th September 2023  
Online Conference

Organization  
**Ieva Stončikaitė** (UPF)  
**João Paulo Guimarães** (FLUP)



# Call for Papers

## Online Conference

### *Slow Down. Breathe In. Get Away.* **Medical Tourism from Antiquity to the Age of Neoliberalism and Climate Change**

**September 30th 2023**

No one likes to go to the doctor. Visits are tedious and can be potentially painful, especially if one has to undergo a complicated surgery. They also become more and more frequent as we approach old age. After getting back home, it doesn't get any better: taking pills is a hassle and doctor's orders are more honoured in the breach. However, medicine can, strange as it may seem, also be pleasurable and fun. For centuries, influenced by Hippocratic humoral theory, doctors prescribed holistic treatments, which could consist of a mere change of air. In effect, medical travel is as old as medicine itself, as logs written through the ages by travellers from different regions of the world make plain. Studies of ancient cultures reveal a strong link between religion and healthcare and recognise, for example, the therapeutic effects of thermal springs and sacred baths. The ancient Greeks laid a foundation for medical tourism by erecting temples to cure their ailments. India developed Ayurvedic medicine, which offered alternative-healing methods. Later, in the middle ages, sick people in Europe went on pilgrimages to far away shrines hoping that contact with a saint's relic might cure them. During the Renaissance, Europeans rediscovered Roman baths and hot springs, which became fashionable wellness centres and a playground for elites. Hippocrates's theory of humours was still in vogue at the time, informing not only people's decisions about where to travel for treatment, but also about alternative medical cures that could contain elements of magic and alchemy.

Western modern medicine, more scientific, impersonal, bureaucratic and business-like, appears to have overtaken these supposedly arcane practices (humoral theory and magic are still taken very seriously in nonwestern cultures). This conference will test whether this is or not the case, taking literature, film and the arts as points of departure for a discussion about the role that travel, tourism and leisure can play in today's healthcare milieu. With the rising cost of healthcare, individuals have started seeking alternative forms of healthcare abroad. Today, people travel outside their homelands for reasons that can include health-related problems, but also for cosmetic procedures and anti-ageing adjustments, dental and fertility treatments, better climate and novel retirement opportunities. Leisure and healthcare are not politically neutral categories, so we wish to interrogate what is the meaning of taking a break and catching one's breath in a time marked by non-stop workaholicism and global pollution, receding shorelines and forced migrations but also new opportunities for developing countries in the medical tourism scene.

**Topics of interest include, but are not limited to:**

- The Medical Value of Leisure, Pleasure and Play
- Cultural Centres and Exotic Destinations
- Pilgrimages, Shrines, Relics and Religious Tourism
- Rest and Mindfulness
- Baths, Spas, Pools and Beaches
- Senior Tourism and Retirement Migrations
- Workaholism and the 24/7 Culture
- "Changing One's Climate" (in the Age of Climate Change)
- Gyms, Hiking, Running and Cycling
- Virtual Tourism
- Anti-Aging Adjustments and Cosmetic Tourism
- Birth Tourism and Fertility Treatments
- Healthcare in the Post-Covid Era
- Retirement Destinations

Although we encourage people to take literature, film and the arts as a point of departure for their reflections, we welcome proposals from all areas in the humanities and the health sciences.

**Bibliography:**

- Duncan Jamieson. *The Self-Propelled Voyager: How the Cycle Revolutionized Travel*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015.
- Hirschfelder, Gunther, Ruth-Elisabeth Mohrmann, and Peter Borsay, eds. *New Directions in Urban History: Aspects of European Art, Health, Tourism and Leisure since the Enlightenment*. Münster: Allemagne, 2000.
- Porter, Roy. "The Medical History of Waters and Spas." London: Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, 1990.
- Walton, John K. "Health, Sociability, Politics and Culture. Spas in History, Spas and History: An Overview." *Journal of Tourism History* 4.1 (2012): 1–14.

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Tim Youngs (Nottingham Trent University)  
João Paulo Ascenso Pereira da Silva (University Nova de Lisboa)

Keynote Speaker: **Roberta Maierhofer** (University of Graz)

\*The conference will be held online via Zoom

\*There is no registration fee.

Proposals for papers should include the title of the paper, an abstract of 250 words, a short bio-note, and contact details. We strongly encourage early career researchers to submit their proposals and share their work in progress.

***The deadline for submitting abstracts is July 30th 2023.***

Please submit your abstract proposals to these email addresses:  
[ieva.stoncikaite@upf.edu](mailto:ieva.stoncikaite@upf.edu) and [guimaraesjpc@gmail.com](mailto:guimaraesjpc@gmail.com)