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PhD in Gerontological Sciences
2018-2019

INVITATION to the Public defence of

Elise CORNELIS

To obtain the academic degree of '**DOCTOR IN GERONTOLOGICAL SCIENCES**'

THE CONCEPT OF EVERYDAY ACTIVITIES IN NEUROCOGNITIVE DISORDERS: ITS IMPORTANCE IN DIAGNOSIS AND NON-PHARMACOLOGICAL INTERVENTION.

Tuesday 2 April 2019

Auditorium **Vanden Driessche**, 17:30

Faculty of Medicine and Pharmacy, Laarbeeklaan 103, B-1090 Brussels

How to reach the campus Jette:

<http://www.vub.ac.be/english/infoabout/campuses>

Summary of the dissertation

Activities of daily living (ADLs) are of paramount importance in neurocognitive disorders, both in the diagnosis as well as in non-pharmacological interventions. Despite the multiple evaluations that have been developed, their content and format varies considerably and many of these evaluations have insufficient or even lacking data on their psychometric properties, making them limited for diagnostic and treatment purposes in neurocognitive disorders. This dissertation aimed to gain knowledge about how to perform an accurate evaluation of ADLs in older persons with neurocognitive disorders. Firstly, a new evaluation of basic (b-) and instrumental (i-) ADLs was developed and validated, showing a high discriminative accuracy in differentiating between cognitively healthy older persons, persons with Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI) and mild Alzheimer's Disease. Secondly, it was investigated whether performance-based measurements of ADLs are superior to report-based measurements of ADLs in differentiating between cognitively healthy ageing, MCI and mild dementia. Thirdly, it was examined which measures of executive functioning significantly account for the variance in everyday functioning in order to improve understanding of the cognitive underpinnings of ADLs. And lastly, it was determined if a multicomponent rehabilitation programme for community-dwelling persons with dementia ameliorates everyday functioning, by assessing b-, i- and advanced (a-)ADLs. This dissertation offers directions for using ADLs in diagnosing and rehabilitating older persons with neurocognitive disorders and recommends a stepwise and semi-structured approach in assessing and addressing everyday activities in neurocognitive disorders.

Curriculum Vitae

Elise Cornelis was born in Ghent on December 23th, 1987. In 2009, she graduated with distinction from the Artevelde University College Ghent with a bachelor in Occupational Therapy. She continued her studies at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel, where she graduated in 2011 as Gerontologist with great distinction. In 2010, she started working as occupational therapist at the department of Geriatrics of the Universitair Ziekenhuis Brussel and as lecturer and researcher at the Artevelde University College Ghent. Between 2013 and 2017 she contributed to several research projects concerning 'active ageing', 'shared decision making in dementia' and 'meaningful activities in nursing homes'. While combining her position as occupation therapist and lecturer/researcher, she started her PhD at the research group Frailty in Ageing at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel focussing on activities of daily living in older persons with neurocognitive disorders. Her research has been presented at several national and international scientific conferences and has resulted in several scientific publications in international peer-reviewed journals. In her private life, she lives together with her partner Evan Deschuyteneer in Merelbeke. Together they have a son, Bas, born in September 2017.