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PhD in Social Health Sciences  
2018-2019

INVITATION to the Public defence of

**Rose-Lima Van Keer**

To obtain the academic degree of '**DOCTOR IN SOCIAL HEALTH SCIENCES**'

**Communication and decision making in critical medical situations  
in hospital within the context of an increasingly multi-ethnic  
patient population.**

**Friday 15 March 2019**

Auditorium **Piet Brouwer**, 14:00  
Faculty of Medicine and Pharmacy, Laarbeeklaan 103, B-1090 Brussels

How to reach the campus Jette:

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

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## Summary of the dissertation

Providing adequate hospital care to patients from ethnic minority groups is challenging. We expect that delivering care in a multi-ethnic context can become even more difficult in critical medical situations in hospital, i.e. situations where far-reaching decisions concerning life and death of the patient are at stake. Because values and preferences concerning life and death are very closely related to ethno-cultural background, we hypothesize that this background could also play an important role in critical medical situations. However, until now long term in-depth empirical research about the actual practice of communication and decision making in multi-ethnic critical medical situations in hospital has been lacking. Additionally, few concrete recommendations to facilitate communication and decision making in such a setting exist. This dissertation tries to fill this knowledge gap by addressing following aims. The first and second aim is to explore in depth the general process of communication and decision making (aim 1) as well as end-of-life decision making (aim 2) between patients from ethnic minority groups, their relatives and healthcare professionals in critical medical situations in hospital. The third aim is to develop recommendations to facilitate communication and decision making between patients from ethno-cultural minority groups, their family members and healthcare professionals in critical medical situations in hospital. To achieve these research aims, two studies were done. The first study was a long-term ethnographic fieldwork study in an intensive care unit of a multi-ethnic hospital in Belgium, consisting of observations on the ward, interviews and document analysis. The second study was a survey research among intercultural mediators working in hospitals in Brussels and Flanders.

## Curriculum Vitae

Rose-Lima Van Keer was born on 17 January 1987 in Chertalla, India. She attended high school at Ursulinen Mechelen, where she graduated in Latin-Mathematics in 2005. In 2009 Rose-Lima obtained her Master's degree in Sociology at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven. In 2011 she obtained her Master's degree in Social and Cultural Anthropology at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven. From 2011 until 2013 she worked as a teacher in a multi-ethnic high school in Brussels, Koninklijk Atheneum Anderlecht. At this school she was also responsible for the development and implementation of the truancy policy, in the context of a subsidized pilot project of the Brussel Capital Region. In 2013 she started her PhD project at the Mental Health and Wellbeing Research Group (MENT) at the Department of Public Health of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel. Her research was supported by the Fonds Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek-Vlaanderen (FWO, application number GOA3312N). In 2018 she became involved in the inter-university research project IGenCare, integrated Personalised Medical Genomics Care Solution for Patients with Rare Genetic Diseases, funded by Innoviris.