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Vrije Universiteit Brussel



Joint PhD VUB & UGent  
2018-2019

INVITATION to the Public defence of

**Steven VANDERSTICHELEN**

To obtain the academic degree of

**'DOCTOR OF SOCIAL HEALTH SCIENCES''  
'DOCTOR OF HEALTH SCIENCES'**

**Volunteering in Palliative Care**  
**A study of volunteer tasks, support, roles, involvement**  
**and collaboration with professionals in the Flemish**  
**healthcare system**

**Friday, 12 July 2019 at 2 p.m.**

In Auditorium **Piet Brouwer**

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

Volunteering as a form of civic engagement is firmly embedded in society. It has a particularly strong history in healthcare and volunteers have been present in palliative care since the early days of the hospice movement. Volunteers are expected to play an even more substantial role in future palliative care.

Our relationship with death and dying has changed drastically over the last century. In the face of increased financial constraints and staff shortages in the healthcare system, public health proponents and government policy developers increasingly emphasise the role of the community in delivering care provision. Volunteer work may represent one important avenue through which communities may be engaged in health care and health services may provide a fruitful, facilitative framework for this endeavour.

This dissertation explores palliative care volunteering in the Flemish healthcare system through quantitative and qualitative studies from the perspective of health services, volunteers, patients, family caregivers and healthcare professionals. It aims to explore the characteristics of organised palliative care volunteering in the Flemish healthcare system in terms of tasks, support, roles, involvement and collaboration of volunteers.

## Curriculum Vitae

Steven Vanderstichelen, born 20 August 1990, obtained his Master's degree in Sociology at the University of Ghent (UGent) in 2014. In 2015, he joined the End-of-Life Care Research Group at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB). He has since worked on the INTEGRATE-project (FWO-SBO) as the executive researcher of the study on Volunteering in Palliative Care. He is also a Steering Group member of the EAPC Task Force on Volunteering in Hospice and Palliative Care.

Four of Steven's articles have since been published in renowned scientific peer-reviewed journals ranking Q1 in fields related to palliative care. Steven has also presented his work numerous times at national and international palliative care and public health congresses. In 2018, he presented his work in plenary presentations at the second INTEGRATE Congress and at the Flemish Congress for Palliative Care. In 2019, he was awarded a plenary presentation for best abstract at the 16th World Congress of the European Association for Palliative Care in Berlin, Germany. Steven was also involved in the organisation of the second INTEGRATE Congress (2018) and the international EAPC RN seminar on public health research in palliative care (2018).