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### **Prof. dr. Luc Deliens, Co-promoter VUB**

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End-of-Life Care Research Group, Department of Family Medicine and Chronic Care  
Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB)



Joint PhD VUB & KU Leuven  
2019-2020

INVITATION to the Public defence of

**Joni GILISSEN**

To obtain the academic degree of

**'DOCTOR IN SOCIAL HEALTH SCIENCES'**  
**'DOCTOR IN BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES'**

**Towards successful advance care planning in nursing homes.**

**Tuesday, 17 December 2019 at 4 p.m.**

In Auditorium **Vanden Driessche**  
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

Globally, populations are ageing, which is increasingly associated with an increase in the global chronic illness burden. This implies longer and more complex illness trajectories and more need for medical decision-making across life and at the end of it. In this context, there has been growing interest in advance care planning which is defined as enabling individuals to define their goals and preferences for future treatment and care, to discuss these with family and healthcare providers, and to record and review these, if appropriate. This process can be undertaken at any time but is widely considered to be an integral part of long-term care.

While advance care planning has been shown to bring numerous clinical and psychosocial benefits to patients and families, implementation in daily nursing home practice still seems to be a challenge. Effectiveness research has therefore been recently recommended to go beyond 'does it work' to also evaluate 'how and under which circumstances'.

The aim of this PhD thesis was threefold: 1) To explore what are preconditions for successful ACP in nursing homes, 2) To develop an intervention programme to improve the implementation of advance care planning in nursing homes in Flanders, and to describe the design of a cluster randomised controlled trial and process evaluation to evaluate its effects and underlying processes of change, 3) To describe the current state of affairs regarding advance care planning on staff level in nursing homes in Flanders.

## Curriculum Vitae

Joni Gilissen has a Master's degree in Social Policy (KULeuven) and a Postgraduate degree in Social Profit and Public Management (Universiteit Gent). She started working as a junior PhD researcher at the End-of-Life Care Research Group (VUB-UGent) in december 2014 and has been working on a joint PhD project with the Centre for Biomedical Ethics and Law (KUL), under the supervision of Dr. Lara Pivodic, Prof. Lieve Van den Block, Prof. Chris Gastmans, Prof. Luc Deliens and Prof. Robert Vander Stichele. The work was carried out in close collaboration with Annelien van Dael (INDUCT, Interdisciplinary Network for Dementia Using Current Technology). In 2017, Joni was awarded the Academy Fellowship by INTERDEM, a pan-European network of researchers collaborating in research on dissemination of early, timely, psychosocial interventions in dementia. As such, she had the opportunity to work at Radboud UMC Nijmegen, The Netherlands. In August 2019, Joni started a 12-month research training at the Global Brain Health Institute (GBHI) in UCSF San Francisco, as one of the selected Atlantic Fellows for Equity in Brain Health. She is awarded a postdoctoral research grant from the Belgian American Educational Foundation (BAEF) and the Fulbright Commission to carry out a subsequent study regarding early palliative care at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Boston Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School, under the supervision of Prof. Jennifer Temel, Prof. Christine Ritchie and Prof. Van den Block, starting September 2020.