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Joint PhD VUB & UGent  
2020-2021

INVITATION to the Public defence of

**Elisabeth HONINX**

To obtain the academic degree of

**'DOCTOR OF SOCIAL HEALTH SCIENCES' (VUB)**  
**'DOCTOR OF HEALTH SCIENCES' (UGENT)**

**Palliative care in nursing homes in Europe.**

The defence will take place on **Monday, 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021 at 4 p.m.**

and will be organised **online**, accessible through the following link:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81761828955>

Meeting ID: 817 6182 8955

Passcode: 377312

## Summary of the dissertation

An increasing number of people are dying in old age, often after an extended period of chronic illness and disability, combined with complex end-of-life care needs. The need for good palliative care has therefore increased significantly. Especially in nursing homes, there is a need for good support during the last years, months and days of residents. To monitor and improve the quality and access to palliative care, we conducted the PACE project ('Palliative Care for older people in nursing homes in Europe'). The first study of this project maps the quality of palliative care and quality of dying in nursing homes in six European countries. We identify the characteristics of nursing home residents, staff and the facility and identify staff attitudes towards palliative care, the structural organization of palliative care and the prevalence of potentially inappropriate treatments and hospitalizations at the end of life. Within the second study of the PACE project, the research team developed the 'PACE Steps to Success' program, which aims to improve palliative care in nursing homes in Europe. This program facilitates organizational change and guides staff in developing their roles, knowledge and skills in palliative care. The program consists of six steps: from discussions with the resident and/or family to monthly reflective de-briefings for staff after a death. This training program was tested from 2014 to 2018 in 72 nursing homes in 7 countries.

## Curriculum Vitae

Elisabeth (°1994) obtained her master's degree in Clinical Psychology (KULeuven) in 2016. After she completed a second master in Neuropsychology (Maastricht University) in 2017, she started as a junior PhD researcher at the End-of-Life Care Research Group (VUB-UGent), working on the Palliative Care for older people in nursing homes in Europe (PACE) Project. PACE is a European funded project (FP7, 2014-2019) comparing the effectiveness of palliative care for elderly people in care or nursing homes in seven European countries and aiming to advise policymakers on optimal palliative care practices. Elisabeth was supervised by Prof Dr. Tinne Smets, Prof. Dr. Ruth Piers, Prof. Dr. Lieve Van den Block and Prof. Dr. Luc Deliens. She presented her work at national and international conferences and was chosen as one of the four highest scoring oral abstracts at the World Research Congress of the European Association for Palliative Care in 2020.