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Joint PhD VUB & UGent
2021-2022

INVITATION to the Public defence of

Anne-Lore SCHERRENS

To obtain the academic degree of

'DOCTOR OF SOCIAL HEALTH SCIENCES' (VUB)

'DOCTOR OF HEALTH SCIENCES' (UGENT)

Using a health promotion approach and behavioral theories to gain insight into factors related to palliative care behaviors among people confronted with serious illness

The defence will take place on

Monday, 30 May 2022 at 5 p.m.

In Auditorium C, at Campus UZ Ghent

Corneel Heymanslaan 10, 9000 Ghent

Summary of the dissertation

Although palliative care leads to improved quality of life in people with cancer, it is often initiated too late or not at all. So far, studies focusing on timely initiation of palliative care are often doing so from a health service and professional carer perspective. What is lacking are studies using a health promotion approach and focusing on the role that behavior of people with cancer and their families can play. One important behavior among others is communication about palliative care, which is frequently avoided or postponed. Theory-based behavioral research and interventions could help to more successfully change such communicative behaviors of people with cancer, and could as such also improve their care outcomes. This dissertation used behavioral theories to better understand and explain why people with incurable cancer start a conversation about palliative care with the physician or why not, by identifying the facilitating and hindering factors. Following, a theory-based behavioral intervention was developed. This intervention may help people with incurable cancer in taking the initiative in communication about palliative care with their physician and support the physicians in reacting appropriately.

Curriculum Vitae

Anne-Lore Scherrens, born November 5, 1992 (Brugge, Belgium) graduated with summa cum laude and as primus of the year as MSc in Health Education and Promotion (Ghent University, 2015). Before, she graduated with magna cum laude as Pediatric Nurse (2013). In October 2015 she joined the End-of-Life Care Research Group (VUB & Ghent University) and Health Promotion Research Group (Ghent University) as a doctoral researcher. Her doctoral research project focused on using behavioral theories to gain insight into factors related to palliative care behaviors among people confronted with serious illness. She was granted a special research fund of Ghent University (BOF) (2017) and a predoctoral fellowship of Research Foundation Flanders (2018).

