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FACULTEIT GENEESKUNDE EN FARMACIE

Doctoraat in de Medische Wetenschappen

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UITNODIGING

Voor de openbare verdediging van het
doctoraatsproefschrift van

Bruno MARCHAL

dinsdag 20 september 2011

U wordt vriendelijk uitgenodigd op de openbare verdediging van het proefschrift van

Bruno MARCHAL

'Why do some hospitals perform better than others? A realist evaluation of the role of health workforce management in well-performing health care organisations'

Op **dinsdag 20 september 2011** om **15 uur**
in auditorium **P. Brouwer** van de
Faculteit Geneeskunde & Farmacie
Laarbeeklaan 103, 1090 Brussel

Situering van het proefschrift

Despite the general acknowledgement of the role of health workforce management in good performance of health services and programmes, little research has been carried out on this issue in low- and middle-income countries. Aiming to contribute to this body of research, a comparative case study based on realist evaluation was carried out in 4 hospitals in Ghana. It intertwined a substantive with a methodological thread. The initial case studies found proof of concept of the high commitment management approach. Subsequent cases identified configurations of management practices and conditions that explain high performance. The well-performing hospitals were found to be run by strong teams that shared and communicated a strong vision with the mid-level managers and the operational staff. Effectively supporting the latter led to a positive organisational climate by triggering reciprocating behaviour on the basis of social and economic exchange. This in turn increased organisational commitment, a known intermediate step towards organisational performance. Methodologically, there is little published guidance on how to carry out realist evaluations in the health sector. This dissertation presents the methodological challenges and shows how we dealt with them, framed against the published guidance. In the realist inquiry tradition, this study is a first step to 'organise' existing knowledge and new empirical findings. It may inspire other researchers to continue this line of research and health service managers to look at their organisation and their management practices through other glasses.

Curriculum Vitae

Bruno Marchal (1967, Leuven) graduated at the Faculty of Medicine, Catholic University of Leuven in 1992. He started his career in Kenya, where he was a medical officer (and later the director) of Nyamira District Hospital from 1993 to 1999. After obtaining a Master's degree in Public Health at the Institute of Tropical Medicine, Antwerp (ITM) in 2000, he took up the position of tutor of the Master in Public Health at the ITM. In 2002, his research work started with the IMMPACT research project, in which he worked on evidence-based policymaking and research capacity strengthening. In 2004, he was, with a colleague, coordinator of the MPH course. His research and teaching focused increasingly on the health workforce and strategic management of health services, and he started the research that resulted in his PhD work. Other research interests include research methodologies for complexity and theory-driven inquiry, and health systems strengthening. He carried out research mainly in sub-Saharan Africa and is involved in a number of international research projects.