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## **Leden van de examencommissie**

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Vrije Universiteit Brussel

FACULTEIT GENEESKUNDE EN FARMACIE

**Doctoraat in de Sociale  
Gezondheidswetenschappen**  
Academiejaar 2010-2011

## **UITNODIGING**

Voor de openbare verdediging van het  
doctoraatsproefschrift van

**Stefan HARDONK**

*In aanwezigheid van een doventolk*

woensdag 25 mei 2011

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

**Stefan HARDONK**

**'Parents' perspective on the care trajectory of their congenitally deaf child'**

*In aanwezigheid van een doventolk*

Op **woensdag 25 mei** om **18 uur** in auditorium **P. Brouwer** van de Faculteit Geneeskunde & Farmacie Laarbeeklaan 103, 1090 Brussel

### **Situering van het proefschrift**

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The context of congenital deafness has changed under the influence of recent technological innovations in the field of medicine. The implementation of universal neonatal hearing screening programmes in many countries has allowed for early care intervention, and cochlear implants offer new possibilities for hearing and spoken language development. Members of the Deaf community have challenged the medical approach of deafness and emphasised a perspective in which deafness is not considered as an impairment, but as a characteristic of a cultural-linguistic minority. Today, little is known about parents' perspective on their child's care trajectory. Given the different conceptual approaches of deafness and the fact that over 90 percent of deaf children are born to hearing parents who are unfamiliar with the issue, it is important to acquire sociological insight in parents' care-related experiences and decisions. This dissertation addresses this issue, based on a sociological analysis of data collected among hearing and deaf parents in Flanders, Belgium. The results demonstrate the importance of parents' conceptualisation of deafness for their care-related experiences, preferences and decisions. Moreover, an explanatory model was developed for parents' care-related decisions, which supports policy and professional practice, as well as scientific progress in the general field of disability research.

### **Curriculum Vitae**

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Stefan Hardonk was born on 23 December 1979 in Borgerhout, Belgium. In 1997 he graduated from secondary school (Koninklijk Atheneum Antwerpen) as a student in Latin-mathematics. He graduated as a Master in Sociology at Vrije Universiteit Brussel in 2004 and in the same year he obtained his teacher's degree.

He started his PhD-activities in 2004 as a scientific researcher in a project funded by the Department of Medical Sociology at Vrije Universiteit Brussel (Brussel, Belgium), and the Department of Nursing and Social Work at Howest University College (Brugge, Belgium). Since 2006 he is working full-time at Vrije Universiteit Brussel as a researcher and educational assistant.