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PhD in Social Health Sciences
2018-2019

INVITATION to the Public defence of

Stephanie VANCLOOSTER

To obtain the academic degree of '**DOCTOR IN SOCIAL HEALTH SCIENCES**'

**School reintegration of childhood brain tumor survivors:
A qualitative study as step towards policy recommendations.**

Thursday 20 September 2018

Auditorium **Piet Brouwer**, 17:00

Faculty of Medicine and Pharmacy, Laarbeeklaan 103, 1090 Brussel

How to reach the campus Jette:

<http://www.vub.ac.be/english/infoabout/campuses>

Summary of the dissertation

For childhood brain tumor survivors (CBTS) and key figures in their lives, returning to school after a period of illness and medical treatment is a milestone. Unfortunately, many of them face challenges associated with school attendance, academic performance and psychosocial wellbeing. Three observations in the Flemish context served as a starting point for this dissertation: the poorly coordinated school policy on CBTS, the often suboptimal collaboration between family, education and healthcare systems, and the lack of research on experiences of CBTS and related key figures on school reintegration. The work consists of an in-depth study of the perspectives of CBTS, parents, school staff and healthcare professionals on the process of school reintegration. This knowledge in combination with the identified areas of concern can be used to guide those who work with CBTS, and to be potentially included in future school policies on CBTS. This study demonstrates that children and key figures have different perspectives on school reintegration. These perspectives evolve over time and relate strongly to the child's school functioning and participation. It also shows that optimal practices of collaboration between parents, teachers and healthcare providers are hard to attain, and generally lack coordination. In addition to suboptimal communication, insufficient preparedness of school staff and inadequate availability of healthcare professionals impede the process of reintegration. Conversely, high parental involvement, multidisciplinary follow-up and introduction of a school liaison positively influence the child's readjustment following re-entry. The importance of additional support from societal structures supporting CBTS and school support services and of using scientifically based models such as the ICF model, is highlighted.

Curriculum Vitae

Stephanie Vanclooster was born on 23 April 1986 in Leuven, Belgium. She attended high school at the Sint-Ursula-Instituut in Onze-Lieve-Vrouw-Waver, where she graduated in Latin and Modern Languages (2004). In 2010, Stephanie obtained her Master's degree in Clinical and Health Psychology at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven. After her main studies, she lived in Brasil for six months as part of the Bachelor Program International North-South Cooperation, where she participated in a social project with children and adolescents. Following her return to Belgium, she started working at LUCAS KU Leuven as a scientific researcher and attended the postgraduate course in Clinical Neuropsychology at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (2011-2013). In November 2013, she started her PhD at the Department of Public Health of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel in collaboration with UZ Brussel and UZ Gent. Her research was supported by the Jeanne and Alice Van de Voorde Fund from the King Baudouin Foundation.