

24-27 March, 2020

Nijmegen, the Netherlands

Keynote speaker:
Els van Wijngaarden, PhD

Assistant professor and researcher
Department of Care Ethics
University for Humanistic Studies
Utrecht, the Netherlands

Advanced European Bioethics Course

SUFFERING, DEATH & PALLIATIVE CARE

Ethical Issues of Medically Assisted Death and Palliative Care in a Pluralistic World

INTRODUCTION

New developments in health care strengthen the promise of a better life for everyone. This process also influences the way societies deal with the end of life and with questions regarding the meaning of suffering and death.

International debates often centre around the question whether medically hastening death is a proper means to preserve human dignity and quality of life. The other side of this issue is palliative care, defined by the WHO as the active total care of patients whose disease is not responsive to curative treatment. The suggestion that adequate palliative care helps prevent the cry for euthanasia and assisted dying, needs careful investigation.

Questions raised by these developments require thorough conceptual interpretation as well as ethical reflection. Objective of this course is to educate the participants on two main aspects: ethical questions of palliative care and medically assisted death, and philosophical, theological and medical reflections on the concepts of death and suffering. Attitudes towards death and dying, and the ethical aspects of continuing or foregoing medical treatment, and of medically assisted death receive considerable attention in this course. In addition, the dimensions of spirituality, rituals and intercultural diversity are covered.

SUBJECTS AND METHODS

The course consists of a series of lectures, discussions, parallel sessions and audiovisual materials centred around a variety of topics:

autonomy and dependence; palliative sedation and euthanasia; spirituality and palliative care; quality of life and a good death; scientific research in palliative care; moral deliberation.

The parallel sessions are devoted to in-depth small group discussions and moral deliberation on different real life cases and particular, contemporary issues in the area of end-of-life decisions. Each group will consist of ten to fifteen participants, led by a faculty member.

The course management strives for a diverse group of participants, with a large diversity in professional and cultural background.

This diversity among both faculty and participants stimulates fruitful exchange of ideas and enhances understanding of others' professional and cultural perspectives on suffering, death and palliative care. The course language is English.

Prior to the course participants will receive a syllabus with introductory readings. Since the programme schedule is strict, participants are advised to study these materials in advance.

Tuesday afternoon 24 March 2020

Introduction into palliative care, Kris Vissers
Keynote lecture, Els van Wijngaarden

Wednesday 25 March 2020

Scientific research in palliative care, Dick Willems (invited)
Autonomy and Dependence, Gert Olthuis
Parallel session: Autonomy and beneficence in terminal illness
Suffering, Jelle van Gorp
Workshop: Art and Suffering
Documentary: 'Choosing to Die'

Thursday 26 March 2020

Physician assisted dying, Marianne Dees
Euthanasia (lecturer to be invited)
Palliative sedation, J. Hasselaar & K. Besse
Parallel sessions: case discussion using the Nijmegen method of moral deliberation

Friday 27 March 2020

Philosophical perspective on death, Menno de Bree
Cultural issues in death and dying (lecturer to be invited)
Introduction into rituals regarding death and suffering, Joanna Wojtkowiak

COURSE COORDINATOR: Gert Olthuis PhD

Gert Olthuis is assistant professor of medical ethics at the Radboudumc. He wrote his PhD-thesis 'Who cares' on the moral attitude of professionals in palliative care practice. Currently he is a researcher on various topics, including informal carers and end-of-life decision making.

CONTACT INFORMATION and REGISTRATION

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Information is also available online. Please go to www.iqhealthcare.nl/en/. You will find our international course under 'education'.

Keynote speaker: With her PhD on 'completed life in old age', Els van Wijngaarden was the first to explore experiences of relatively healthy older people with a strong wish for a self-directed death as they considered their lives no longer worth living. Her study won the prestigious [Research Prize 2017 of the Praemium Erasmianum Foundation](#). She continues to build on this pioneering work, focussing on death and dying in old age with a specific interest for and the role of choice and control at the end-of-life.

PARTICIPANTS

Previous participants for this course came from diverse professional backgrounds, such as nursing, medicine, health care administration, ethics, philosophy, theology and pastoral care, and PhD students in these areas.

At the conclusion of the course participants will receive a certificate. Participants are reminded that they may be eligible for continuing education credits from their professional association. Registration for accreditation from the Dutch Medical Association (KNMG) and the Dutch register for Pastoral carers (SKGV) will be submitted. Please contact the program coordinators for further details or if you have any questions regarding this issue.

COURSE FEES and PAYMENTS

The course fee is € (Euro) 790. There is an early bird discount of € 100 for registration before 1 January 2020. This price includes tuition and course materials, as well as refreshments, three lunches and a dinner.

- **Kris Vissers MD, PhD**, professor in pain and palliative care, Radboudumc
- **Dick Willems MD, PhD**, professor of medical ethics, University of Amsterdam (invited)
- **Jeroen Hasselaar PhD**, assistant professor in palliative Care, Radboudumc (invited)
- **Kees Besse PhD, MD**, anesthesiologist, Radboudumc
- **Marianne Dees PhD**, general physician, post-doctoral researcher, Radboudumc
- **Jelle van Gorp PhD** assistant professor clinical bioethics, Radboudumc
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- **Menno de Bree**, assistant professor philosophy, University Medical Centre Groningen (invited)
- **Joanna Wojtkowiak PhD**, assistant professor Ethics of Care and Spiritual Counseling Sciences, University of Humanistic Studies
- **Gert Olthuis PhD**, assistant professor medical ethics, Radboudumc