

Research Seminar in Health Sciences

Prof. Dr. Stefan Boes
Prof. Dr. Gisela Michel

Department of Health Sciences and Medicine

Fall Semester 2020 (HS201569)

Description

The Research Seminar in Health Sciences offers a platform for PhD students, Post-Docs, and Master students as well as interested faculty members to discuss recent developments in health sciences, with a focus on topics in health behavior and health economics. Internationally renowned researchers and PhD students are invited to present their work and all presentations are followed by discussions with the audience.

Lecturers

Date	Invited speaker	Presentation title	Zoom credentials
21.09.2020	Stefan Gysin	Nurse practitioners in Swiss family practices as potentially autonomous providers of home visits: An exploratory study of two cases	ID: 942 6013 9743 Passcode: HS201569
28.09.2020	Anica Ilic	Information needs among family members affected by childhood cancer: A systematic review	ID: 931 2948 1576 Passcode: HS201569
05.10.2020	Luzius Mader	The impact of childhood cancer on the parents - findings from a national cohort study in Denmark	ID: 928 4335 1014 Passcode: HS201569
12.10.2020	Barbara Gantner	Grandparental care in chronically ill children: A Systematic Review	ID: 945 3541 4097 Passcode: HS201569
19.10.2020	Vica Tomberge	Using health psychology theory to explain uterine prolapse risk behaviors in Nepal	ID: 968 1724 1589 Passcode: HS201569
02.11.2020	Christina Tzogiou	The migration-specific determinants of health care utilization in vulnerable immigrants: A Swiss cross-sectional study	ID: 917 4960 2449 Passcode: HS201569
09.11.2020	Isabella Bertschi	Beyond "patient" and "partner": Viewing adjustment to health impairments from a dyadic perspective	ID: 973 8173 6675 Passcode: HS201569
16.11.2020	Bonaventure Ikediashi	The role of health literacy, disease-specific knowledge and sickle cell disease in a low resource setting	ID: 984 4544 0759 Passcode: HS201569
30.11.2020	Yanmei Liu	How do Different Factors Influence Choice of Health Plans in Switzerland?	ID: 954 6913 2866 Passcode: HS201569
7.12.2020	Carolina Pedraza	Needs, desires and psychosocial outcomes in bereaved parents who lost their child due to cancer	ID: 975 5564 7424 Passcode: HS201569

Format

Due to the Coronavirus situation, all appointments during the Fall Semester 2020 will take place in hybrid format. Maximum 16 participants are allowed to physically participate to the seminar, but there are no limits regarding the online attendance. Please write an e-mail to the organizer and confirm your participation in advance.

Requirements & Credits (ECTS)

PhD students who are interested in receiving 1 ECTS are required to:

- Visit the seminar 8 out of 10 times
- Choose one presentation and write a two-pages report on the topic
- Actively participate to the sessions

Please write an e-mail to the organizer until September 30 in order to confirm your interest in receiving the ECTS and communicate the chosen topic.

Contact

For questions and assistance, we are available via e-mail:

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Nurse practitioners in Swiss family practices as potentially autonomous providers of home visits: An exploratory study of two cases

Dr. med. Stefan Gysin, University of Lucerne

Speaker Stefan Gysin holds a master's degree in medicine and did his doctoral thesis (MD) about genodermatoses after graduating from medical school in Basel in 2016. He worked as a resident in internal medicine at the Adullam and Bethesda Spital in Basel before starting his PhD in Health Sciences at the University of Lucerne and the PhD program in Public Health at the Swiss School of Public Health in 2017. He worked as an assistant researcher at the Institute of Primary & Community Care (IHAM&CC) Luzern and is currently the program manager of the "Joint Master of Medicine" at the University of Lucerne.

Stefan's PhD thesis is about interprofessional collaboration in Swiss primary care. His focus lies on the role of so-called Advanced Practice Nurses in Swiss family practices. He's studying the acceptance, competencies, tasks, benefits and costs of this new type of health professionals.

Date and time 21 September 2020, 14:15 – 15:15

Location Room HS3, University of Lucerne, Frohburgstrasse 3, 6002 Lucerne

Content In Swiss primary care, general practitioner (GP) home visits have decreased due to impending GP shortages particularly in rural areas. Nurse practitioners (NP) are newly introduced in family practices and could potentially offer home visits to the increasing number of multimorbid elderly. We analyzed consultation data from two pilot projects (Practice A and Practice B) with the goal to measure the frequency and patient characteristics of NP consultations both in the practice and on home visits, and to determine the NPs' autonomy based on the required GP supervision. In Practice A, 17% of all NP consultations were home visits, in Practice B 51%. In both practices, the NPs saw older patients and reported higher autonomy on home visits compared to consultations in the practice. In Practice A, the NP encountered a higher share of multimorbid patients on home visits than in the practice, and the NP's proportion of autonomously conducted consultations increased from 0% in the first month to 19% after 13 months of GP supervision. In Practice B, the NP was autonomous in about three-quarters of consultations after two years on the job. These first cases provide some evidence that NPs could reach a relatively high degree of autonomy and might pose a potential solution for the decreasing numbers of GP home visits to multimorbid elderly in Swiss primary care.

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Information needs among family members affected by childhood cancer: A systematic review

M.Sc. Anica Ilic, University of Lucerne

Speaker Anica Ilic holds a BSc in Business Administration issued by SUPSI, the University of Applied Sciences and Arts of Southern Switzerland, and a M.Sc. in Communication with major in healthcare communication and management issued by USI, the University of Southern Switzerland. She started her PhD at the Department of Health Sciences and Medicine of the University of Lucerne in April 2019. She currently works in the team of Prof. Dr. Gisela Michel at the Grandparents Project, a study funded by the SNSF that investigates grandparents' involvement and psychosocial outcomes when a grandchild is diagnosed with cancer.

Date and time 28 September 2020, 14:15 – 15:15

Location Room HS4, University of Lucerne, Frohburgstrasse 3, 6002 Lucerne

Content **Background:** Having a child diagnosed with cancer brings about uncertainty and fear to entire families. Providing relatives with adequate information might allow relieving psychological distress they experience throughout the disease course and help them to cope better with the illness and its consequences. Despite the importance of providing effective information to relatives, it is complex to understand the magnitude and nature of information needs. This systematic review has the overall objective to assess the information needs in the context of childhood cancer among relatives and significant others of childhood cancer patients and survivors.

Methods: A systematic search of the literature concerning information needs of relatives and significant others of childhood cancer patients and survivors was conducted in PubMed, PsycINFO, CINAHL, and Scopus. The search strategy identified 3128 potentially relevant articles. Studies applying both quantitative and qualitative approaches will be included in the systematic review and data will be analyzed through narrative synthesis.

Results: A comprehensive overview on the current research on satisfied and unmet information needs among relatives and significant others of childhood cancer patients and survivors will be provided. Moreover, we aim to identify a) how the needs for information differ between the various stages of the disease, and b) relatives', childhood cancer patients' and survivors' characteristics that are associated with greater information needs. Finally, we will evaluate how information needs are defined and assessed in current research, and which theories are suitable to gain further understanding on information needs.

Conclusion: The systematic review will provide insights on the informational preferences and unsatisfied information needs of relatives and significant others of childhood cancer patients and survivors, and allow to identify areas that need further understanding. Ultimately, the findings of the current review will allow to provide adequate information to relatives and significant others of childhood cancer patients and survivors, contributing to relieve their psychological distress. Funding: Swiss National Science Foundation (Grant no. 10001C_182129/1)

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The impact of childhood cancer on the parents - findings from a national cohort study in Denmark

Dr. Luzius Mader, ISPM & Danish Cancer Society Research Center

Speaker Luzius Mader finished his PhD at the University of Lucerne and is currently working as a postdoctoral research fellow in the Pediatric Cancer Epidemiology Research Group at the Institute of Social and Preventive Medicine at the University of Bern. He is also a research associate at the Childhood Cancer Research Group, Danish Cancer Society Research Center in Copenhagen, Denmark. His research focuses on cancer epidemiology and survivorship research, with a particular interest in childhood cancer and its socio-economic consequences for the patients and their families.

Date and time 5 October 2020, 14:15 – 15:15

Location Room HS4, University of Lucerne, Frohburgstrasse 3, 6002 Lucerne

Content **Background:** Childhood cancer is a devastating experience and may affect the psychosocial functioning of all family members. Having a child with cancer may disrupt a family's daily routine for long time periods and requires adaptation of family structures and changes in parental responsibilities to accommodate the needs of the sick child. The parents suddenly are confronted with frequent and long-lasting hospitalizations of their child and the fact that their child may die. Increased caregiving and practical demands together with the psychological burden may have severe short- and long-term effects on the parents.

Objective: Understanding the impact of childhood cancer on the parents is crucial to developing adequate guidance along the child's cancer trajectory. In this research program we aimed to:

- 1) Assess the impact of childhood cancer on parental working status and income and to identify determinants of adverse changes after the child's cancer diagnosis by calendar period
- 2) To assess the impact of having a child with cancer on parental separation, divorce, and future family planning
- 3) To assess the risk of hospital contacts for psychiatric disorders in parents of children with cancer

Methods: We conducted a nationwide cohort study using Danish administrative and health-related registry data from Denmark. Our cohort included parents of children diagnosed with cancer in 1982–2014 (n=12,418) and matched comparison parents of cancer-free children (n = 125,014).

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Grandparental care in chronically ill children: A systematic review

M.Sc. Barbara Gantner, University of Lucerne & Children's Hospital Lucerne

Speaker Barbara Gantner holds a BSc in Psychology issued by the University of Basel and an MSc in Psychology issued by the University of Zurich. In 2013 she started to work in the Child and Youth Psychiatry Baselland. Since 2015 she works in the Consultation-Liaison psychiatric service of Lucerne Psychiatric Service in the Children Hospital and since 2017 in the pediatric oncology team. In 2017 she finished the further education of psychotherapy issued by the Academie of Behavioral Therapy in Bern and 2018 the further education of psychooncology in Freiburg, Germany. She started her PhD at the Department of Health Sciences and Medicine of the University of Lucerne in January 2019.

Date and time 12 October 2020, 14:15 – 15:15

Location Zoom

Content **Background:** If a child is chronically ill, the entire family system is affected and grandparents are often an important part of the family dynamic. They are frequently the main resource for families when parents need to work, for personal relief, and in difficult situations. However, little is known on type and role of care and support if a grandchild is suffering from a chronic disease. We aimed to gain insight into the i) role of grandparents' care, ii) extent of their responsibilities, and iii) differences between grandparents and parents in caring for chronically ill grandchildren.

Method: We systematically searched the databases Pubmed, PsycInfo, SCOPUS and CINAHL for peer-reviewed original research articles. We included publications on grandchildren aged younger than 21 years suffering from a chronic disease and presenting results on type and role of grandparents' care or support.

Results: We included 11 publications on 9 studies. All studies were qualitative. We found that the role of grandparents consists of both, physical and emotional support. Their role was on the sideline, but a reliable support for the entire family. The experience of a chronically ill child was often reported to have strengthened family bonds. However, grandparents reported lack of knowledge regarding the grandchild's condition.

Conclusions: Grandparents provide their support from the sidelines, but they often take care of the entire family. Making adequate information about the disease available to grandparents might help to increase knowledge and facilitate appropriate support and care provided by grandparents.

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Using health psychology theory to explain uterine prolapse risk behaviors in Nepal

M.Sc. Vica Tomberge, University of Bern

Speaker	Vica Tomberge is a PhD student at the department of Health Psychology and Behavioral Medicine at the University of Bern. Her research focuses on global health with an emphasis on gender equality. She obtained a Master in Psychology at the University of Düsseldorf and worked in a women's rights organization on gender-based violence in regions of (post-)conflict and on research in environmental and health psychology in water and sanitation projects affiliated to Eawag: Swiss Federal Institute of Aquatic Science and Technology before coming to Bern.
Date and time	19 October 2020, 14:15 – 15:15
Location	Room HS4, University of Lucerne, Frohburgstrasse 3, 6002 Lucerne
Content	<p>Background: Uterine prolapse is a major health issue for women in Nepal. One of the main risk behaviors of uterine prolapse is the daily carrying of water for domestic use, especially during the vulnerable periods of pregnancy and postpartum. By using approaches based on health psychology theory we examined the psychosocial determinants of safe water-carrying to improve the understanding of why women carry water during pregnancy and postpartum. A convergent mixed-methods design aims to provide simultaneous insights into statistical associations and in-depth individual perspectives on psychosocial factors of safe-water-carrying in a low-income population.</p> <p>Methods: Trained local interviewers gained the data in five communities in the Kavre and Sindhupalanchowk district of Nepal. We conducted 1001 structured face-to-face and qualitative interviews with women involved in water collection and their family members. We performed generalized estimating equations for modelling the psychosocial determinants for intention and behavior related to avoiding water-carrying in the period of pregnancy and three months post-partum. Thematic analyses of interview transcripts probed subjective perceptions on reasons to apply safe water-carrying.</p> <p>Findings: Women had high risk perception, outcome expectancies (belief in positive consequences of safe water-carrying), and behavioral intention, average social support and low self-efficacy (belief in ability to perform) to avoid water carrying during pregnancy and postpartum. Outcome expectancies, self-efficacy and injunctive norms (perceived approval of performance by others') to avoid water-carrying and the social support given by mothers-in-law related to the intention and to the behavior of safe water-carrying during (post-) pregnancy. Results of the qualitative interviews indicated that women explained water-carrying in postpartum period by a lack of family support, a shift of health decision-making power to in-laws and low behavioral control. Fulfilling domestic responsibilities even in postpartum period were mentioned to promote social recognition.</p> <p>Discussion: In conclusion, women in Nepal are aware of risk factors of uterine prolapse but family decision-making structures and low support make it difficult for them to discontinue risk behavior. Our results indicate that interventions should focus on improving the feeling of self-efficacy for safe water-carrying (e.g. by reducing weight or asking for help) as well as social acceptance and social support of resting behavior during pregnancy and postpartum. Behavior change interventions at the family and community level may make it easier for women to adopt low-risk behaviors.</p>
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The migration-specific determinants of health care utilization in vulnerable immigrants: A Swiss cross-sectional study

M.A. HSG Christina Tzogiou, Zurich University of Applied Sciences (ZHAW) & University of Lucerne

Speaker	Christina Tzogiou has a background in economics and has been working as a research associate in health economics at the Winterthur Institute of Health Economics at Zurich University of Applied Sciences (ZHAW) since 2014. In 2016 she started her PhD in the Department of Health Sciences and Medicine at the University of Lucerne. Her main research focus lies in inequalities in health and health care and in the health economic aspects of migration. In addition, she conducts health technology assessments and health economic evaluations.
Date and time	2 November 2020, 14:15 – 15:15
Location	Room HS4, University of Lucerne, Frohburgstrasse 3, 6002 Lucerne
Content	tbd
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Beyond “patient” and “partner”: Viewing adjustment to health impairments from a dyadic perspective

M.Sc. Isabella Bertschi, University of Zurich

Speakers	Isabella Bertschi has obtained her B.Sc. and M.Sc. degrees in psychology from Universities of Fribourg and Basel and has started her PhD studies at University of Zurich in 2018. With previous experience working in a multidisciplinary environment including health scientists, psychologists, sociologists, and special needs educators, she aims to study health-related phenomena at the intersection of academic disciplines. Her current PhD research focuses on couples coping with and adjusting to physical health impairments.
Date and time	9 November 2020, 14:15 – 15:15
Location	Room HS4, University of Lucerne, Frohburgstrasse 3, 6002 Lucerne
Content	<p>Individuals facing severe health impairments such as chronic illnesses or disabilities often present with significant psychological distress. Not only patients experience distress, also the people close to them are affected. Due to the high level of closeness in committed relationships, romantic partners are especially prone to experiencing distress when their spouse faces severe health impairments. While distress is high for both directly (‘patients’) and indirectly affected individuals (‘partners’), couples also have resources to cope with distress that exceed the resources available to the respective individuals. Coping in couples is the focus of several theoretical frameworks and has more recently become explicitly applied to couples facing health impairments. Rooted in dyadic coping theory, the notion of ‘we-disease’ (Kayser et al., 2007) describes an interpersonal view of health conditions as a shared challenge for couples: both partners experience distress, but both partners can lend support to each other, and additionally they can cope together. Consciously considering the partners’ interdependence in adjusting to health impairments will result in a deconstruction of the classical roles of ‘patient’ and ‘partner’. Ultimately, this can improve clinical care across a wide variety of health conditions.</p> <p>In the talk, she will present theoretical and empirical findings supporting the notion of ‘we-disease’ from a systematic literature review on dyadic adjustment to physical disability and introduce an ongoing research project on couples coping with visual disability of one partner. Clinical implications of viewing adjustment to health impairments from a dyadic perspective will be discussed.</p>
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The role of health literacy, disease-specific knowledge and sickle cell disease in a low resource setting

M.Sc. Bonaventure Ikediashi, University of Lucerne

Speaker Bonaventure Ikediashi is currently a PhD student in the Department of Health Sciences and Medicine, University of Lucerne. He has previously earned an MA in Health Sciences from the University of Lucerne. During his master's studies, Bonaventure did an internship at the Swiss Paraplegic Research Institute, where he studied the role of perceived environmental barriers and functioning in spinal cord injury. His PhD research focuses on health literacy and disease-specific knowledge in sickle cell disease in the context of low resource settings.

Date and time 16 November 2020, 14:15 – 15:15

Location Room HS4, University of Lucerne, Frohburgstrasse 3, 6002 Lucerne

Content Sickle Cell Disease (SCD) is a common form of chronic blood disorder predominant in Sub-Saharan-Africa, India and the Middle East. This condition is characterized by frequent extreme episodes of pain often leading to hospitalization, presenting a significant burden to the patients and their caregivers. At present sickle cell disease has no cure accessible to a majority of the patients who suffer from the disease. Thus, this condition requires management which involves early recognition of symptoms, identification, and prevention of the triggers of the symptoms. It is thought that such management requires a thorough knowledge of the disease and considerable health literacy levels. Despite its importance, these topics are not explored in SCD in the context of low resource settings particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, which has the highest prevalence of the disease.

This study focuses on the role of Health Literacy, disease-specific knowledge and SCD in low resource setting (Benin). More specifically the aims of the study are:

1. To evaluate the reliability and validity of a French translated version of the HELMA.
2. To assess the Health Literacy levels, and SCD specific knowledge in a) parents of children with SCD, and b) adolescents and young adults (AYA) with SCD.
 - a. Are there differences in the current state of Health Literacy levels and SCD specific knowledge in parents of children with SCD, and among AYA with SCD.
 - b. Do age, gender, education status/parents' education status explain different Health Literacy levels and SCD specific knowledge in parents of children with SCD / in AYA with SCD?
3. To examine the association between Health Literacy, SCD specific knowledge and SCD outcomes (annual hospitalizations, number of emergency doctor visits and frequency of occurrence of painful episodes, self-reported health status) in a) parents of children with SCD and b) AYA with SCD.

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How do Different Factors Influence Choice of Health Plans in Switzerland?

M.Sc. Yanmei Liu, University of Lucerne

Speaker	<p>In April 2017, Yanmei Liu started her PhD in Health Economics at the University of Lucerne. She graduated from Karolinska Institutet (Stockholm, SE) in June 2012 with a Master of Medical Science in Health Economics and Health Promotion. She studied Pharmaceutics at Shenyang Pharmaceutical University (China). During her master studies, Yanmei worked as a student assistant and conducted a systematic review in cost-effectiveness analysis of medical treatment for myocardial infarction. Apart from that, she completed an internship at Hemholtz Zentrum München in Germany, assisting in a project addressing childhood obesity.</p> <p>The major focus of Yanmei's research project is on the Swiss health insurance system and health care demand. The mandatory Swiss insurance system requires individuals to make decisions regarding their health care plan selections. How individuals understand complex insurance coverages, what factors affect choices of different plans, and how this choice affects health care utilization are important research areas that have implications on the efficiency of a health insurance system.</p>
Date and time	30 November 2020, 14:15 – 15:15
Location	Room HS4, University of Lucerne, Frohburgstrasse 3, 6002 Lucerne
Content	<p>In some health insurance systems, individuals are required to make choices among optional health plans. Theories of decision-making on insurance suggest there are various determining factors that influence plan choice. However, little is known about the effects of different factors on the decision for health insurance plans. By analyzing the Swiss Household Panel data (wave 2017), this paper combines empirical evidence with theories to estimate to which extent different determinant factors affect decisions about health plans. Preliminary results indicate that individuals, who are more risk averse, with a lower level of financial literacy, tend to opt for low deductibles, and vice versa for consumers who are more familiar with the insurance system. Risk attitudes are associated neither with selection of an alternative insurance plan nor the decision of supplementary insurance. Individuals with higher income are more likely to purchase higher deductibles and supplementary insurance, but less likely to choose an alternative plan. Age, personal attributes and number of children in a household are also important factors determining an individual's insurance choice. This study implies that behavioral barriers of individuals, which are often related to insufficient health insurance literacy, may better explain selections of insurance under uncertainty. In particular, the income effect on health insurance choices might not be intended by policy makers. Therefore, success to a system empowering individuals to make informed insurance choices conditional on their medical needs and financial circumstances relies crucially on understanding of behavioral limitations.</p>
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Needs, desires and psychosocial outcomes in bereaved parents who lost their child due to cancer

MD Carolina Pedraza, University of Lucerne

Speaker Carolina Pedraza is a medical doctor from Colombia. She earned her degree as general physician (Cum Laude) at the Nueva Granada Military University in Bogotá, Colombia, continuing her clinical work at the Pediatrics Department in a public hospital in the same city. Carolina completed her specialization in pediatrics in 2017. Since then, she has been working as a general pediatrician with a special interest in the holistic needs of the patients and their families. Currently, Carolina is part of Prof. Gisela Michel's team, working as a PhD student at the University of Lucerne since September 2019. Her PhD project focuses on the needs and desires of bereaved parents in palliative-bereavement care in Pediatric Oncology. Her project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement No 801076 and the Swiss Cancer League grant No.KFS-4995-02-2020

Date and time 7 December 2020, 14:15 – 15:15

Location Room HS4, University of Lucerne, Frohburgstrasse 3, 6002 Lucerne

Content Despite the enormous success in treatment of childhood cancer with decreasing mortality and increasing survival rates of more than 80%, childhood cancer remains the second most frequent cause of death after accidents in children aged 1 year and older in developed countries. Hence, one in five children cannot be cured and, as a result, dies from cancer.

Pediatric Palliative Care (PPC) in pediatric oncology has been proposed to begin at the time of diagnosis and extends into the bereavement period for bereaved families, therefore it is not only a patient centered, but it is family centered care. Although in recent years, advances in bereavement care have arisen and new literature has been published, there are still some gaps that need to be researched.

This project focuses specifically on the coping strategies, lived experiences and psychosocial implications, needs and desires of bereaved parents who lost their child to cancer. Additionally, we will assess how PPC support for parents and family members extends after the death of the child, being essential that there is a well-established and holistic PPC. The overall aims of this study are:

1. To systematically review the literature on parents' grieving and bereavement process after their child has died from cancer (systematic literature review).
2. To explore the characteristics of PPC at the EOL, in particular bereavement services, which are offered to patients and family members in specialized pediatric oncology centers in Europe (cross-sectional survey).
3. To explore the socio-demographic outcomes and support needs of bereaved parents who lost their child due to cancer in Switzerland.

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