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PhD in Gerontological Sciences  
2014-2015

INVITATION to the Public defence of

**Veerle BAERT**

To obtain the academic degree of '**DOCTOR IN GERONTOLOGICAL SCIENCES**'

**Motivators and barriers for physical activity at higher age****Monday 7 September 2015**

Auditorium **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>



Vrije Universiteit Brussel

## Summary of the dissertation

This PhD dissertation focuses on factors influencing the engagement of older adults - with or without additional diseases - in physical activity (PA) and the organization of PA for older adults in nursing homes (NH). In a systematic review on motivators and barriers (paper 1) for PA for adults aged 80 and over, a large variety of reasons why people at higher age stop or start to be physically active are described. The systematic review included 44 articles, involved 28583 subjects and yielded 61 motivators and 59 barriers for older adults to perform PA. Improving health and fear showed to be typical for the oldest old. In a qualitative study (paper 2) we provided an overview of potential facilitators and constraints for PA for older adults diagnosed with osteoporosis (OP), according to the patients themselves and professionals. Social contact, habit and feeling good were - among others - factors reported as motivators. Pain, fear of falling, bad weather and lack of interest were barriers to PA. Papers 3, 4 and 5 describe the results of 3 studies investigating motivators and barriers for the organization of PA in Flemish NH according to physiotherapists, occupational therapists and their administrators. A secondary goal was to examine the knowledge of the WHO guidelines regarding PA and to reveal potential motivators and barriers for the implementation of the guidelines. The strongest motivators were improving the residents' physical and psychological wellbeing. The participants were aware of the negative consequences for the general wellbeing of the older residents who are not physically active. The knowledge of the WHO guidelines was rather poor. Although the participants are convinced that the guidelines are useful, they believe the implementation of the guidelines is unrealistic. The identification of existing barriers and motivators for organizing PA according to NH staff creates substantial opportunities to enhance the level of PA in NH.

## Curriculum Vitae

Veerle Baert was born in Sint-Gillis-Waas, Belgium, on the 11th of April 1975. She finished secondary school (Latin-Math) in 1993 at Sint-Lodewijkcollege in Lokeren. She obtained a bachelor degree in Social Work at the K.V.M.W. in Gent and graduated in 1996 with distinction. In 1998 she graduated as a candidate in Medical-Social Sciences at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (V.U.B.) with distinction. In 2000 she acquired a master degree in Gerontology at the VUB with distinction. At the University of Gent she obtained an academic teaching degree in Social Health Sciences in 2002 (with distinction). Since 2001 she worked part time as an academic assistant at the Gerontology department of the V.U.B.. Currently she combines here academic work with a part time job at the Association of Flemish Cities and municipalities (VVSG) where she is working as a policy officer local policy for older adults.

In 2004 she married with Samuel de Smet. They have 3 sons: Pepijn (°2005), Floris (°2006) and Hendrik (°2009).