

Save the date!  
**April 29<sup>th</sup> 2024**  
**11h00 – 17h00**

# Towards a better understanding of the experience of suffering in the end-of-life context

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*Place: Room 004  
(ground floor)*

*IDHEAP Building  
University of  
Lausanne*

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## Theme

Long before it cured diseases, the purpose of medical care was to alleviate suffering. However, our Western contemporary approach to suffering is changing. With the modernization of medicine, advances in technology, and the prominence of a curative approach, suffering is increasingly fought. Indeed, suffering is often treated as an enemy to conquer (using military terminology) rather than a phenomenon to comprehend. Therefore, the meaning and place of suffering are pushed to the sideline, leaving little room for the exploration of this phenomenon within the context of end-of-life care.

This symposium seeks to place suffering at the forefront and provide an in-depth exploration of this phenomenon, with a particular focus on suffering at the end of life. Led by an interdisciplinary and international collective, this symposium aims to unravel both theoretical and practical aspects surrounding the experience of suffering in the context of end of life.

To do this, we will shed light on the multiple facets of the experience of suffering. This includes, for example, the upheavals of living towards the end of life and living with a severe illness, fears of future suffering, loss of meaning, helplessness. The experience of suffering is also located in a relational and systemic context on which we will reflect. We will also explore the way in which patients navigate their medical trajectory accompanied by their loved ones and health professionals, and whether this trajectory also shape the experience of suffering.

With this symposium, we wish to create a collaborative and informative space. A space where experts of various disciplines can share knowledge, exchange ideas and collectively contribute to a profound, nuanced and rich understanding of the experience of suffering at the end of life.

## Speakers

Dominique Girard	Psychologist, Postdoctoral researcher at Radboud University Medical Center, Nijmegen, The Netherlands, Professor at the Department of Health Sciences, Université du Québec à Rimouski, Rimouski, Canada
Marte Fleur Antonides	Physician, Care Ethicist, and PhD candidate at Radboud University Medical Center, Nijmegen, The Netherlands
Valérie Bourgeois-Guérin	Psychologist, Co-director of the Réseau Québécois de Recherche sur le Vieillissement, Professor at the Department of Psychology, Université du Québec à Montréal, Montreal, Canada
Thessa Thölking	Physician, Care Ethicist, and PhD candidate at Radboud University Medical Center, Nijmegen, The Netherlands
Claudia Gamondi	Physician, Head of the Palliative and Supportive Care Service, Lausanne University Hospital, Switzerland, Lausanne, Switzerland
Martina Hodel	Psychologist, Ethicist Luzern, Switzerland

## Program

11:00 – 11:15	Welcome and Introduction (Coffee) R.J. Jox, Lausanne
11:15 – 12:00	The Meaning of Suffering in the Context of Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide: a Multiperspective and Longitudinal Study D. Girard & M. F. Antonides, Nijmegen
12:00 – 12:45	Towards a Better Understanding of Suffering of Older People with Incurable Cancer: Crossing Reflections from Men with Incurable Cancer and their Caregivers V. Bourgeois-Guérin, Québec
12:45 – 14:00	<b>Lunch break</b>
14:00 – 14:45	A Multiperspective and Longitudinal Insight Into Suffering Within the Patient Journeys of Older People with Multimorbidity T. Thölking, Nijmegen
14:45 – 15:30	Unbearable Suffering in Assisted Suicide: Between Theory and Practice in Palliative Care C. Gamondi, Lausanne
15:30 – 16:00	<b>Coffee break</b>
16:15 – 17:00	Assisted Dying for Severe and Persistent Mentally Ill Persons and the Role of Intolerable Suffering M. Hodel, Luzern
17:00 – 17:15	Conclusion and Perspectives
17:15	<b>Aperitif</b>

## Registration and Information

Attendance is free of charge. For people who wish to attend in person, please register no later than March 13th, 2024, at the following address: [lisa.beretta@chuv.ch](mailto:lisa.beretta@chuv.ch)

## Webcast

The symposium can be followed online:  
<https://unil.zoom.us/j/5050742020?omn=96133683346>

## Access and parking

We advise to choose public transports (Metro M1 stop Mouline).

For car parking options see:

<https://www.unil.ch/parking/fr/home.html>

## Funding

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