Communicating about end of life and related matters in hospice consultations

ESRC DTP Collaborative Studentship

Loughborough University and LOROS, Hospice Care for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland

The Midlands Graduate School is an accredited Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP). One of 14 partnerships in the UK, the Midlands Graduate School is a collaboration between the University of Warwick, Aston University, University of Birmingham, University of Leicester, Loughborough University and the University of Nottingham.

Loughborough University, as part of Midlands Graduate School, is inviting applications for an ESRC Doctoral Studentship in association with our collaborative partner LOROS, Hospice Care for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, to commence in October 2020.

The successful applicant will undertake a study using the methodology of conversation analysis – entailing detailed inductive analysis of recordings of real-life interactions. The student will examine how sensitive conversational activities, including discussing death and dying, are managed within interactions between patients, their companions, and healthcare practitioners who specialise in palliative and end-of-life care. The applicant will spend time with LOROS Hospice staff and service users, and visit other UK Hospices. Through field visits, discussions, relevant reading, and academic supervision, the applicant will be supported in developing their own distinctive research foci.

After familiarising themselves with key concepts and empirical studies, the student will examine an existing dataset comprising 85 audio/visually-recorded hospice consultations involving 85 patients (and sometimes companions), 5 consultants in palliative medicine, 5 occupational therapists, and 3 physiotherapists. Permissions exist for secondary analyses of these data. Analysis will include watching recordings, identifying sequences of talk containing phenomena of interest, and generating detailed transcripts using notation capturing what people say and how they say it, including silences, intonation, and embodied conduct.

The collaborating organisation (LOROS) hosts a large research and education centre. The education department delivers communication skills training annually to over 350 health and social care professionals from the East Midlands and beyond.

The student will be based within the Centre for Research in Communication and Culture at Loughborough and benefit from input from the VERDIS research group, led by Ruth Parry and Marco Pino. The group specialises in the study of communication on palliative and end-of-life care. The student will receive comprehensive training in the analysis of interpersonal communication.
Familiarity with healthcare contexts and with conversation analysis would be advantageous but are not vital. The applicant should be fully prepared to work closely with data that can be emotionally and indeed existentially challenging; associated support mechanisms in place for all team members will also be available to the PhD student.

Application Process

To be considered for this PhD, please complete the Collaborative Studentship application form available online here and email this alongside your CV, to Denise Wade: D.J.Wade@lboro.ac.uk. Shortlisted applicants will be required to provide two references.

Application deadline: Monday 2 March 2020

Midlands Graduate School ESRC DTP

Our ESRC studentships cover fees and maintenance stipend and extensive support for research training, as well as research activity support grants. Support is available only to successful applicants who fulfil eligibility criteria. To check your eligibility, visit: www.mgsdtp.ac.uk/studentships/eligibility/

Informal enquiries about the research or the School of Social Sciences and Humanities at Loughborough prior to application can be directed to Dr Marco Pino: m.pino@lboro.ac.uk.