Centre for Organising Health and Care Research

COHCR Seminar: Aylin Baykal, 3 December

Speaker: Aylin Baykal, PhD Candidate, Warwick Business School

Time and Location: 13:00-14:30, Thursday 3 December 2026. In-person at WBS in Room 2.007.

Register: Please email cohcr@wbs.ac.uk to book your place. Refreshments will be provided.

Autonomy After Dark: How Healthcare Workers Experience and Exercise Autonomy Across Night Shifts

Business studies carries a diurnal bias, an assumption that organisational life happens during the day. Yet millions of people work through the night, keeping hospitals and other essential systems running, and we know little about how work changes after dark. This seminar presents work in progress on how healthcare professionals experience and exercise autonomy across night shifts. At night, supervision thins and support becomes less available, but clinical work cannot stop. For some workers this brings a sense of freedom to make their own decisions, while for others the same absence means inheriting responsibilities because nobody else is there. Greater autonomy, then, does not necessarily mean greater control.

Drawing on interviews and a longitudinal diary study with healthcare professionals, the research suggests that autonomy is not a fixed feature of a job but fluctuates within a single shift, shaped by clock time, unpredictable clinical events and workers' changing capacity. The seminar explores what this might tell us about working life at night, and closes with open questions, with feedback from the audience very welcome.

Aylin Baykal is a fourth year PhD candidate in the E&I Group at Warwick Business School. Her research explores work after dark, examining how the temporal, social and sensory features of the night reshape how work is organised in sectors that depend on continuous service and care. Currently, her empirical work spans two contexts. In the UK's night time economy, she studies small businesses through ethnographic fieldwork. In healthcare, she studies night shifts through interviews and a longitudinal diary study. Aylin holds an MSc in Development Administration from University College London and a BSc in Business Administration from New York State University at Binghamton.