

Operations Group and COHCR Seminar

Speakers: Vincent Peters, Assistant Professor, Tilburg University and Tom Aben, Assistant Professor, WBS.

Time and Location: 11:00-12:00, Thursday 7 May 2026; in-person at WBS in Room 1.003

Register: Please email operationsgroup@wbs.ac.uk to book your place

Hybrid care pathway configuration: Operational trade-offs in combining digital and in-person hospital care

Purpose: This study examines how hospitals configure and operationalize hybrid care pathways to integrate digital and in-person care elements. We investigate operational design choices, coordination mechanisms, and what trade-offs emerge for hybrid care pathways.

Design: A qualitative multiple case study was conducted across five hybrid care pathways in four hospitals, covering variations in condition acuity, clinical setting, and digital-physical integration level. Data were collected through 79 semi-structured interviews with healthcare professionals and patients, complemented by observational data and archival data. Within- and cross-case analysis were used to describe each pathway's unique operational configuration and identify patterns and recurring tensions across all five cases.

Findings: Hybrid care does not represent a single, standardized model but a configurational challenge defined by recurring tensions between two domains of trade-offs: (1) efficiency-related trade-offs (Standardization versus flexibility; Centralization versus decentralization) and (2) patient-centred trade-offs (Patient empowerment versus professional expertise; Automation versus human interaction).

Originality: This study advances our understanding of hybrid care configuration as an operational design phenomenon, highlighting four trade-offs that need to be taken into account.

Practical implications: Healthcare professionals and managers can use the identified trade-offs as a framework to guide hybrid care pathway configuration, aligning digital and in-person elements to optimize both operational performance and patient experience.

Vincent Peters is a tenured assistant professor at Tilburg University, the Netherlands. His research interests focus on Service Operations Management, with a specific focus on Healthcare Operations Management. In his work, he explores how the organization of care impacts healthcare operations and outcomes, both for patients as well as for healthcare professionals and organizations. His current research interest goes out to digitalization in healthcare, especially on how to utilize and integrate virtual visits with in-person visits. His research is characterized by a clear collaboration with societal partners. His work has been published in top academic journals in the field of Operations Management, including International Journal of Operations and Production Management (IJOPM) and International Journal of Production Research (IJPR) as well as in healthcare journals like European Journal of Pediatrics (EJPE), BMC Health Services Research (BMC HSR), and Clinical Kidney Journal (CKJ). He also serves as Editorial Review Board member at IJOPM and Editorial Advisory Board member at EJPE. Prior to his current position, he earned his Ph.D. from the department of Management at Tilburg University. After his PhD, he worked as a research coordinator at a Dutch Hospital (Catharina Hospital Eindhoven), a postdoc at Tilburg University and served as a guest professor at Ghent University.

Dr. Tom A.E. Aben is an Assistant Professor at Warwick Business School. He earned his PhD in Supply Chain Management in December 2022 at Tilburg University. His research is focused on the impact of digitalisation on both the intra-organisational and inter-organisational operations of organisations with a (semi-)public background. More specifically, Tom is interested in how (semi)public organisations implement and adopt (new) digital technologies, how digital transformations influence buyer-supplier relationships, and the role of a network of actors in the digital transformation of a complete sector. He integrates his primary research field of supply chain management with insights from the information systems field and the healthcare operations field. Tom's work has been published both in academic journals (e.g. International Journal of Operations & Production Management) and practitioner journals (e.g. Deal! Magazine).