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Invitation for PhD defense

by Birgitte Lerbæk



Managing physical health issues in everyday life

An ethnographic study among people with schizophrenia

Thursday 20 May 2021 at 1 PM (CET)

The defense will be held online via Zoom.

Registration by email to: inst.klinisk.phd@dcu.aau.dk

About the PhD thesis

Aim: This research thoroughly investigated aspects of everyday life among a group of people with schizophrenia, to gain insight into how physical health issues were managed.

Methods: The PhD study was designed as an ethnographic study and drew on social constructionism. Nine participants with schizophrenia were recruited at two residential facilities (n=4) and at an outpatient clinic, providing treatment to younger people with newly diagnosed schizophrenia (n=5). Additionally, 27 mental health care professionals contributed with their perspectives on management of physical health in mental health services. Qualitative methods were employed, and four analyses were conducted to explore the data material.

Findings: The participants with schizophrenia experienced debilitating physical health issues in everyday life and two 'typical' strategies for managing these were identified. Both management strategies were inexpedient insofar as neither strategy resulted in transition towards better health. They were used repeatedly and constituted an ongoing process in which existing physical health issues and strategies used to manage them in everyday life were sustained.

The findings include an explanatory theory about the complex social processes that were enacted as part of management of physical health in everyday life.

Sustaining factors were identified as interacting in complex, multi-dimensional processes in the social context of everyday life, resulting in a deadlock in which management of debilitating physical health issues with inexpedient strategies, was continuously sustained among the participants with schizophrenia.

There is a need for future research that explores aspects of beneficial management of physical health issues among people with severe mental illness.

Invitation for PhD defense

The Department of Clinical Medicine, Aalborg University and Aalborg University Hospital are pleased to invite to PhD defense by RN, Cand. Scient. San., *Birgitte Lerbæk*, who will defend the thesis entitled:

Managing physical health in everyday life **An ethnographic study among people with schizophrenia**

The PhD defense will take place

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