

The CSI will be hosting a guest seminar
by Jeannette Pols
aiming at discussing her book "Care at a Distance "
27 April, 2017, 11:00 am-1:00 pm, Salle St-Jacques

The seminar is open upon registration to all interested persons.

Care at a Distance. On the Closeness of Technology, Amsterdam University Press, 2012

Politicians promote telecare as an efficient and affordable solution in providing medical care for an ageing population. Telecare, they promise us, will support older people with chronic disease to 'manage' themselves better and thereby reduce the amount of health professionals needed. Nevertheless, technology-pessimists assert that telecare will transform human care into a distant and cold affair. They predict that older people will die while under the continuous surveillance of sensors and cameras, but remote from any real human contact.

This widely researched study presents some of the detailed ethnographic analyses of the pioneering care practices in which patients and nurses use telecare devices. It analyses these practices with the help of theoretical insights drawn from various fields, such as anthropology, science- & technology studies and empirical ethics.

The author concludes that neither a caring utopia of self managing patients nor an uncaring high-tech health care system bears any resemblance to actual care practices employing telecare. In the observed practices, telecare leads to more intense caring relations, resulting from a spectacular raise in the frequency of contacts between nurses and patients. Patients are much taken by this, not because they feel they are finally able to manage themselves better, but because they can 'leave things to the experts'. The patients find that caring is something that is best done for others.

The book frames urgent questions about the future of care and telecare, and points to ways in which innovative care practices can be built on actual and everyday concerns, rather than on hopes, hypes or nightmares.

Jeannette Pols holds the Chair in "Social Theory, Humanism & Materialities" at the University of Amsterdam and teaches at the Department of sociology and anthropology, Faculty of social behavioral sciences.

Presentation and discussion (in English) prepared by Nassima Abdelghafour.

Contact and registration: Quentin Dufour, Alexandre Violle and Marie Alauzen

Seminar program available on: <http://www.csi.mines-paristech.fr/accueil/seminaires/seminaire-csi/>