

Job offer fulltime Ph.D. candidate

TELeHEALTH: Exploring the telework-health relation in an active working population

What do we offer?

- **Two 4-year full-time Ph.D. position** funded by the FWO and F.N.R.S (*1 year + three years after positive evaluation*) at **Ghent University** (Faculty of Health Sciences, prof. dr. Barbara Cagnie) and **UCLouvain** (Faculty of Motor Sciences, prof. dr. Bas de Geus) in collaboration with Sciensano (Health information service, prof. dr. Robby De Pauw).
- You will join a **dynamic, multidisciplinary, and ambitious** research team with content expertise and an international research network;
- **Ph.D. training and guidance** by promotor;
- **Research infrastructure** and training in its use;
- Training, and guidance in writing **scientific papers**;
- Research track leading to a Ph.D. after 4 years and the possibility of completing the **doctoral training programme** at Ghent University or UCLouvain.
- The opportunity to obtain the **highest academic degree** (Doctor in Health Sciences), at one of the **top universities** in the world.

Expected profile:

- You hold a **Master of Science** degree in one of the fields relevant to the research programme (e.g. epidemiology, public health, biomedical sciences, psychological sciences, rehabilitation sciences and physical therapy, movement sciences, medicine, etc.);
- You are willing to make a **full-time commitment** to scientific research for 4 years and are strongly motivated to obtain a Ph.D.;
- You are keen on **data analysis** and **processing** large databases;
- Experience with software packages (R, SAS, MATLAB, etc.), programming and complex statistical analysis is a plus but not necessary;
- You are **intrinsically motivated** for the subject (see below) and work accurately;
- You are fluent in **English**;
- You are willing to make a (limited) contribution to the general teaching, research, and service tasks.

How can you apply?

- Send the following documents via e-mail to prof. dr. Robby De Pauw (robby.depauw@sciensano.be) prior to the 10th of February 2023.
 - application letter;
 - your CV, including an overview of your obtained study results. When applicable, a list of publications, relevant courses taken, and conference presentations (bound in 1 file of 10 MB at most).
- We invite suitable candidates for selection interviews on the **16th of February 2023**. An **online** interview is possible if required.

Description of FWO project “TELEHEALTH”

Full title:

Exploring the telework-health relation in an active working population – a longitudinal prospective study

Summary background and aim of the research project:

The number of regular teleworkers has increased significantly after the COVID-19 pandemic. Although telework could offer greater work schedule flexibility for employees by avoiding travel time of the home-work commute, there is also a risk of increased sedentary behavior causing a harmful health impact. To date, there is a paucity of research on this complex telework-health relationship, whereby most research is either of low quality or based on a limited sample. To bridge the current knowledge gaps, we propose a well-established and rigorous methodology, whereby we aim to unravel the complex telework-health relation into direct effects, mediators, and moderators. To this end, we have identified theoretical and evidence-based indicators at the individual (i.e. employee) and organizational (i.e. employer) levels. We will apply a rigorous causal framework considering these important indicators, whereby we assess the direct effects and indirect effects (e.g. through changes in physical activity or shifts in psychological states) of telework on health. Once these effects become clear, key factors will be identified to inform on how to mitigate harmful effects and enhance the beneficial effects of telework on health. Lastly, we will evaluate predictive patterns in the telework-health relationship, whereby we will predict the health of a teleworker based on previous behavior. Teleworkers at risk will then be offered evidence-based advice on how their risk can be mitigated.

Project group:

Robby De Pauw (Ghent University and Sciensano) works as a senior researcher at the Service of Health information in Sciensano and is a guest professor at the Department of Rehabilitation Sciences at Ghent University. His main focus area is health information on non-communicable diseases. He has a large interest in musculoskeletal diseases and is an expert in data analysis. Barbara Cagnie (Ghent University) works as an associate professor at the department of Rehabilitation sciences, with respectively main research interests in neck pain. She has an interest in the group of office workers and has published research in the area of musculoskeletal complaints in that specific group. Bas de Geus is appointed as a full-time professor at the UCLouvain in the faculty of Movement Sciences and affiliated with the IACCHOS Research Institute. He is an international leading expert in the field of ‘Cycling and Health’, active transportation, and physical activity in general. He has recently been appointed full-time professor at the UCLouvain to lead the teaching and research in the field of Physical Activity and Health.