Panel title:
Living Intimacy: exploring the relational and intimate spaces of chronic conditions

Panel organizers:
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Panel abstract:
The meaning of chronic conditions and illnesses depends on many things: diagnostic practice, (bio)medical intervention, healthcare systems and welfare policies, patient biographies and not least intimate relationships. As Zoë Wool puts it in After War: “ways of being are also always ways of being intimate with.” Living intimacy in light of chronic conditions means that people’s (shared) emotional and affective spaces, including love and sex, are transformed. Yet, while chronic conditions and illnesses transform intimacy profoundly, research into living with them nonetheless often focuses on the perspectives of either patients or their partners without attention to how these are intertwined; how they are shaping as well as being shaped by relations with intimate others. This panel wants to explore how intimacy is lived in light of chronic conditions and, reversely, how the meaning of chronic conditions and illnesses depends on the intimate spaces in which they are lived. We invite speakers to attend to the relationalities of the intimate spaces of chronic conditions and illnesses based on empirical studies that, together, will cover a broad range of conditions (cognitive, mental, physical). Furthermore, we encourage speakers to reflect upon what such an explicit relational approach implies for existing theoretical conceptualizations of and methods for studying living intimacy with chronic conditions.