

Call for papers: Foolish things, clever stuff? The material side of nursing and care.

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Call for Papers: Foolish things, clever stuff? The material side of nursing and care.
18th– 20th January 2017, Heidelberg

Nursing is more than an interpersonal rapport in which individuals are connected to one another in a special relationship. In the course of the organisation of nursing and care – whether in a nursing home, a hospital or at home – a multitude of diverse items are involved, each with their own object-logic. Exactly what these are and how they are perceived by the nursing staff or the patients varies considerably and is dependent for instance upon the setting under consideration or the temporal context. How though, when considered in combination, do things which are neither an arbitrarily applicable means to an end (foolish things) nor as sophisticated troubleshooting all-rounders (clever stuff) – contribute to the construction of nursing and care?

The interdisciplinary and international conference 'Dumme Dinge, schlaue Sachen?' ('Foolish things, clever stuff?') takes up this question and focuses as well on the things of care: Material objects have until now usually been considered as 'auxiliary resources'. In academic discussion as well as in collections, museums and exhibitions they remain largely unseen. This conference forms the conclusion of the interdisciplinary research project: 'Die Pflege der Dinge – Die Bedeutung von Objekten in Geschichte und gegenwärtiger Praxis der Pflege' (Care and Things - Objects and their Significance in Past and Present Nursing Practice, in brief: Pflegedinge) sponsored by the German Federal Ministry for Education and Research. The central element of the conference is to offer the opportunity for dialogue and for networking among researchers with a focus on material culture studies and researchers with a focus on nursing and care. Along with the presentation and discussion of the central results of the project's collaborators, the conference is above all aimed at bringing together scientists, researchers and academics from beyond their particular disciplines and beyond national borders, who wish to present object-centred approaches to the following, or similar, issues:

- How are/were theoretical and conceptual developments in things of care materialised?
- How do/did individuals and things in nursing and care settings interact? How can/could objects lead to changes within the nursing and care sectors?
- How do/did new nursing-oriented knowledge and the introduction of new things interact with one another in nursing and care settings?
- How do/did societal perceptions and arrangements materialise in things of care, and how do/did things contribute to constructing them? Who had/has access to what knowledge? How are/were possible power structures formulated here?
- (How and why) do things in nursing and care settings contribute to creating or preventing

for instance personal privacy, autonomy, safety, normality, intimacy and affinity?

Contributions from nursing studies, ethnology, cultural anthropology, gerontology, history, history of nursing, museum studies, social pedagogy and organisational studies, sociology and other, related disciplines would be very welcome.

Contributions may be submitted and presented either in German or English. Please send your abstract (max. 500 words) together with a brief introduction of yourself (max. 50 words) at the latest by 25/5/2016 to: ferenc.kantor@gero.uni-heidelberg.de

Further information on this research project can be found at: <http://www.pflegederdinge.de/englishsummary>

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