Graduation project DfI or SPD
Appropriate care in the last phase of life: designing the role of patients in shared decision making

Background
Appropriate care follows the patient’s wishes and care needs, without causing extra suffering. To realize this, shared decision making by patients, relatives and health care professionals about continuing or stopping treatment is of utmost importance. In the last phase of life, decisions have to be made about withdrawal or withholding. Currently, patients are not always involved in the decision process, nor are they fully aware of the choices and the consequences of (withholding) treatment. Furthermore, the process of shared decision making is often limited to the physician and patient. However, informal caregivers and nurses can support the patient and provide relevant information due to the nature of their contact.

Involving the patient and other relevant stakeholders (informal caregivers, physicians and nurses) in shared decision making is expected to improve appropriate care, without causing extra suffering.

Assignment
Your assignment is to redesign the care decision path of patients in the last phase of life in which the patient has a more active role, particularly during hospitalization. The ultimate aim is to support patients in their decisions about life-sustaining treatment and provide appropriate care. Developing an elaborate patient journey of the current situation and of the desired future scenario will be an important part of your project. The project will focus on a specific patient group, to be decided on together with Amsterdam UMC.

First you will analyze the current care path of patients in the last phase of life, including all contact moments, information and other aspects that influence decision making. Next, you will optimize the care path by exploring when and how patient and (in)formal caregivers could be involved in a shared decision making process. Your project will involve participation of patients, informal caregivers and healthcare professionals (physicians, nurses) right from the start, to ensure that the design meets all the requirements of patients, caregivers and the healthcare system. Conducting interviews, observations and evaluations of your ideas will be essential during this project.

We are looking for
We look for a student of Industrial Design Engineering, preferably master DfI of SPD, who has an explicit interest in care for patients in the last phase of life, and in shared decision making about life-sustaining interventions. It is important to be open-minded and curious. Familiarity with the Dutch language is highly recommended.

We are offering
The position will be a collaboration between Medisign and Amsterdam UMC (location VU Medical Center). You will work at VUMC, at the department of Occupational and Public Health. We facilitate time- and place-independent working, which makes it possible for you to determine which days you work in Amsterdam.

Contact and more information
Start: as soon as possible.
If you are interested, please send us a short motivation e-mail and your Portfolio. You can send this to: Marieke Sonneveld (m.h.sonneveld@tudelft.nl) and Irene Jongerden (i.jongerden@vumc.nl).
For more information on the project, you can contact Irene Jongerden, senior researcher Amsterdam UMC, location VUmc (i.jongerden@vumc.nl or 020-4442764)