

The Dynamics of Medical Transformations: Society, Technology, Knowledge and Ethics

25-28 August 2026 | Rotterdam, Netherlands

38th European Conference on Philosophy of Medicine & Health Care

This conference is organized by the [European Society for Philosophy of Medicine and Healthcare](#) and the [Erasmus School of Health Policy and Management](#), [Erasmus University Medical Centre](#) and [Erasmus School of Philosophy](#).

Technological innovations have continuously reshaped medicine—not only transforming clinical practices but also challenging and reformulating the moral values, norms, and knowledge frameworks that underpin healthcare. From the invention of the stethoscope to the rise of artificial intelligence, from the upheavals of world wars to the global COVID-19 pandemic, every crisis and breakthrough prompts fundamental questions: What do we prioritise in medicine? What counts as valid evidence? What does it mean for care to be 'good'? Breakthroughs in biotechnology, today's digital revolution, global conflicts and environmental crises all demand fresh, critical reflection. To grasp the present, we must situate it within a broader historical and social context, examining how healthcare evolves at the crossroads of societal change and technological innovation. This conference invites contributions that critically explore how technological and social transformations shape the moral and epistemic landscape of healthcare. We welcome historical case studies, philosophical analyses, empirical research, and theoretical explorations that illuminate these dynamics. Abstracts may address – but are not limited to – the topics below.

AI and digitalization of healthcare

- Ethics of clinical prediction models
- Generative AI in healthcare
- Robots in care practices
- Digital health records and patient autonomy

Biotechnology and moral change

- Organoids and other new entities
- New organ replacement therapies
- Cyborgs, synthetic entities and their moral status
- Reproductive medicine

Evolution of medical knowledge

- Evolution of evidence-based medicine
- Technology and the creation of medical knowledge
- Crises as drivers for innovation
- Historical insights in epistemic change

Theoretical frameworks & methods

- Contingency and medical morality
- Relation between history and philosophy of medicine
- Science and Technology Studies perspectives
- Historical case studies of value change

Research ethics

- Response to novel technologies
- Ethics of data science
- Development of regulatory frameworks
- Trust in science and conflicts of interest

Public health and prevention

- Datafication of public health
- Surveillance medicine in a digital age
- Ethics of pandemic preparedness
- History of public health paradigm

Environmental challenges and healthcare

- Green bioethics
- One Health approach and philosophy
- Planetary health
- Sustainability as a principle of bioethics

Bioethics in crisis situations

- Medical ethics in warzones and conflict situations
- Triage and prioritization of scarce resources
- Global and inter-generational justice
- Research during disasters and military conflicts

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Organization

The registration process, the call for abstracts, the development, and the publication of the announcements of the programme as well as the mailings to participants will be taken care of by the ESPMH Secretariat in Dublin, Ireland.

ESPMH Secretary:

Prof. Bert Gordijn
Secretary of the ESPMH (www.espmh.org)
Institute of Ethics, Dublin City University
All Hallows Campus, Senior House, S212,
D09N920 Dublin, Ireland
E: bert.gordijn@dcu.ie

Local Conference Coordinators:

Prof. Maartje Schermer
Health ethics in a technological society
Erasmus School of Health Policy &
Management, Erasmus University Rotterdam
<https://www.eur.nl/en/eshpm>

Contact person:

Prof. Maartje Schermer
E: schermer@eshpm.eur.nl

Important dates

1 March 2026

Deadline for submission of abstracts

1st half of March 2026

Selection of abstracts

1st half of April 2026

Draft programme

15 May 2026

Deadline for early bird registration
and payment

Language

The language at the conference will be **English**.

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Erasmus School of Health Policy & Management

[Erasmus School of Health Policy & Management \(ESHPM\)](#) is a leading institute in Europe for education and research on health policy, management, and economics. Founded as part of Erasmus University Rotterdam, ESHPM has grown into a hub for interdisciplinary research and teaching.

With over 1,350 students and 200 staff, ESHPM addresses complex healthcare challenges through programs such as the Bachelor in Health Policy & Management and specialized Master's degrees in Healthcare Management and Health Economics Policy and Law.

Research themes include market organization, quality of care, and sustainable healthcare workforce.

[Erasmus School of Philosophy \(ESPhil\)](#) fosters critical thinking and interdisciplinary dialogue. Research themes include The Making of Modernity, Human Conditions, and Philosophy of Economics. ESPhil offers Bachelor's and Master's programs, including a Research Master in Philosophy and Economics.

[Erasmus MC – Medical Ethics, Philosophy & History of Medicine \(MEP&H\)](#) Erasmus MC is one of Europe's largest and most advanced medical centres. Its section of MEP&H explores ethical challenges in clinical practice, technological innovation, and justice in healthcare. It also studies historical foundations of morality in medicine and supports ethics committees. It teaches medical humanities to medical and clinical technology students.



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Erasmus University Rotterdam

Erasmus University Rotterdam (EUR) is a leading international research university known for its strong focus on societal impact, interdisciplinary collaboration, and global engagement. Founded in 1913, the university grew from a school of commerce into a broad institution spanning economics, business, medicine, social sciences, law, philosophy, and the humanities. Its modern, urban campus in the heart of Rotterdam reflects the city's spirit of openness, innovation, and international exchange.

The university is named after Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466–1536), the influential Renaissance humanist, scholar, and early champion of critical inquiry. Erasmus advocated for intellectual freedom, dialogue across differences, and education grounded in ethics and human dignity.

At EUR, Erasmus's legacy is visible not only in its name but also in its commitment to rigorous scholarship that engages real-world challenges. Programmes in economics and management are globally renowned, while the Erasmus MC is one of Europe's leading medical centres. The University offers over 25 Bachelor programs and over 100 Master programs. The university's diverse student body - ca 28.000 students - and strong international partnerships reflect the cosmopolitan ethos of both Erasmus and Rotterdam itself.



Together, they form a vibrant academic community shaped by curiosity, critical thinking, and social responsibility.



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Registration

Registration takes place online at the ESPMH homepage (www.espmh.org).

To avail of the early bird registration fee (see below) registration should be completed, and the registration fee should be paid, no later than **15 May 2026**.

Fees are higher after that date. The fee should be paid to the ESPMH Treasurer (details provided on the online registration form).

Abstract booklet, program, papers

All participants will be provided with a program as well as an abstract booklet at the registration desk. The program will also be made available online well in advance.

Full manuscripts of presented papers can be submitted for publication in the ESPMH journal "Medicine, Health Care and Philosophy. A European Journal." Participants are invited to read the instructions for authors on the website of the journal and to submit an appropriately prepared article online for review (see [here](#)).

Registration fee

A reduced registration fee is applicable for participants who are members of the ESPMH.

The registration fee for PARTICIPANTS covers: the welcome reception (Tuesday), two lunches, the refreshments during breaks, the conference dinner (Thursday) and an abstract booklet.

Paid before 15 May 2026:

ESPMH member: € 470
Non-member: € 580

Paid after 15 May 2026:

ESPMH member: € 525
Non-member: € 650

The registration fee for ACCOMPANYING PERSONS covers: the welcome reception (Tuesday) and the conference dinner (Thursday).

Paid before 15 May 2026: € 100

Paid after 15 May 2026: € 120

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Getting to/around Rotterdam

By air

- **Amsterdam Schiphol Airport** - one of Europe's largest hubs - is 25-30 minutes away from Rotterdam by direct train.

Trains from Schiphol Airport run frequently (up to 6 times per hour) to **Rotterdam Central Station**.

Tickets can be purchased at ticket machines or via the NS app. A single ticket costs approximately 16 – 19 Euro, depending on train type.

- **Rotterdam The Hague Airport** is 15 minutes from the city centre and offers some European connections.

By car

Rotterdam is accessible by several motorways.

Parking

- Paid parking is available throughout the city
- **Inside campus Woudestein**: Parking is on the guests' own expenses. Short term parking rates can be found [here](#).
- **Kralingse Zoom** - P+R (Park and Ride) parking area; around 10 min walk to the conference venue. Parking here is on the guests' own expenses, unless they have a Dutch OV-card. € 0,50 per 14 minutes; € 21 for the day.

By train

Rotterdam is well connected to major European cities.

- **Eurostar** connects Rotterdam directly with London, Brussels, and Paris.
- **High-speed trains** (Intercity Direct) run between Rotterdam, Amsterdam, Schiphol, and Antwerp.
- Regular intercity services link Rotterdam to the rest of the Netherlands.

For tickets and timetable information see:

<https://www.nsinternational.com/en>

Travel info: <https://www.rotterdam.info>

Rotterdam public transport

RET (Rotterdamse Elektrische Tram) operates trams, buses, and metro lines.

The conference venue can be reached from the city centre by metro line A, B, and C and a 10 min walk, or by trams 1, 7, and 11. For more information see: <https://www.ret.nl/en/>

OV-pay (Openbaar Vervoer Pay) allows contactless payment with debit/credit cards or mobile apps (Apple Pay, Google Wallet). No registration is needed; fares are charged automatically.

For more information see:

<https://www.ovpay.nl/en>

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While in Rotterdam

Rotterdam is the second largest city in the Netherlands and is well known for its port. The port of Rotterdam is the largest port in Europe and third largest in the world. The city is becoming increasingly popular as a tourist destination.

The *New York Times* has nominated Rotterdam for the [top 52 places to visit](#).



For more information on attractions, architecture, shopping, drinks and dining in Rotterdam, please visit <https://www.rotterdam.info/en/>

Or get a Rotterdam city card at <https://www.rotterdam.info/en/visit/city-card-rotterdam>

Some of Rotterdam's **tourist highlights** are

- Netherlands' largest building 'De Rotterdam'
- The stunning revamp of the Central Station
- The Erasmus Bridge, nicknamed 'The Swan'
- The Van Nelle Factory, UNESCO World Heritage
- The Cube Houses
- Museum Boijmans van Beuningen
- Witte de With, Rotterdam's coolest street
- The Dutch Fotomuseum, located in a former warehouse
- The impressive Markthal, the first indoor market in the Netherlands
- Dinner in the trendy De Hofbogen, a former train station



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Currency

The official currency of the Netherlands is the Euro (€).

Visa

Visas are required for some non-European nationalities to travel to the Netherlands. Please contact your travel agent and/or the Netherlands Consulate/Embassy in your country for exact details and visa application procedures.

To apply for a visa, please check [online](#).

Social programme

A **harbor cruise** and a **city- and architecture walking tour** will be organized on Wednesday after the conference program.

Participants who have registered for the conference will receive an e-mail about the options in June '26.



Shopping

There are ample shopping opportunities, for example the **Witte de With street**, the **Oude Binnenweg**, or the 'Koopgoot'.

For food- and architecture lovers:
Try the 'Markethal'.



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Conference venue and accommodation

Conference venue

Location conference venue:

The conference will be held in the 'Sanders Building' at campus 'Woudestein' of Erasmus University Rotterdam.

[Campus Woudestein](#)

Burgemeester Oudlaan 50
3062 PA Rotterdam

For a map of the campus see [here](#).

Getting to the venue:

- **Metro** A, B, and C to 'Kralingse Zoom' (and 10 min walk)
- **Tram** 7, 1, and 11 to 'Erasmus University' (and 5 min walk), or
- Do as the Dutch do and rent a **bike**. 😊



Accommodation

Conference participants are responsible for their own accommodation.

Early booking is strongly advised (August is peak tourist season!).

Hotels

Rotterdam offers a wide range of hotels. Some options include:

- [Novotel Rotterdam Brainpark](#) (closest to the conference venue)
- [Hotel New York](#) (fancy hotel in the old harbour)
- [Nhow Rotterdam hotel](#) (modern, great views)
- [Holiday Inn Express Rotterdam](#) (near Central Station)
- [Motel One Rotterdam](#)
- [The James](#)
- [Bilderberg Park Hotel Rotterdam](#)
- [Hotel Emma](#) (small hotel, budget option)
- [Hotel van Walsum](#) (friendly boutique hotel)
- [Hostel Rotterdam](#) (in the cube houses)

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About Rotterdam



Rotterdam is a city defined by openness, innovation, and an enduring capacity for reinvention. Originating in the 13th century as a modest settlement along the River Rotte – the city’s name meaning a dam in the Rotte-, it grew steadily through maritime trade and eventually became home to one of the world’s largest and busiest ports. This long history as an international gateway has shaped the city’s character, economy, and outward-looking identity.

Rotterdam’s modern story is inseparable from the destruction of its historic centre during the WWII bombing in 1940. Rather than rebuild what was lost, the city chose a pioneering architectural path. The result is a striking urban landscape known for experimentation and daring design — from the Erasmus Bridge and Cube Houses to the Central Station and the gleaming Boijmans Depot, the world’s first publicly accessible art storage facility.

Today, Rotterdam is home to more than 670,000 residents representing over 170 nationalities, making it one of Europe’s most culturally diverse cities. Its neighborhoods reflect this cosmopolitan richness, offering a wide range of culinary, artistic, and community traditions. The city’s cultural scene is vibrant and outward-facing, with internationally recognized events such as the International Film Festival Rotterdam, the North Sea Jazz Festival, and Rotterdam Architecture Month.

Alongside its cultural dynamism, Rotterdam is known for its waterfront developments, green initiatives, and progressive approaches to mobility and climate adaptation. Visitors encounter a city that combines deep historical roots with a confident, forward-looking spirit. As they say in Rotterdam: *“Niet lullen maar poetsen!”*

