

# PhD student, department of Blood-borne Infections, Amsterdam (36 hours)

MK 05-13 EXTEW

## Job Title:

How safe should donor blood be? - PhD project in public health ethics  
Donated blood is screened for infectious agents to protect patients against infection. Such screening measures are effective in reducing risks to a minimum, but the quest for safety comes at a cost. For example, the incremental cost-effectiveness of specific screening tests can be more than 1,000,000 euro/QALY, which is very high even compared to the most expensive medical treatments. How far should one go in preventing infection risks? This research project analyses this question from an ethical point of view. The project includes (a) clarification and review of the normative assumptions and arguments in current blood screening policies, (b) philosophical analysis of core concepts like precaution, safety, reasonable risk and responsibility, and (c) normative ethical analysis of obligations to maintain and promote blood safety. The study combines philosophical analysis with (focus group) interviews of stakeholders. The goal is to develop a sensible idea of obligatory and reasonable precautions against infection; and to define practical criteria for blood donor screening that are to be recommended to Sanquin

## Unit:

At the department of Blood-borne infections, we study the epidemiology and detection of blood-transmittable agents. In addition we analyse decision-making and cost-effectiveness of preventive safety measures.

## We are looking for:

For this PhD research project we seek a graduated (MA level) philosopher/bioethicist with excellent skills in normative and conceptual analysis in practical ethics. The successful candidate will have a good mix of relevant skills and qualities, including:

- curiosity and passion for studying practical philosophical problems, notably in relation to public health
- excellence in academic writing
- good communicative skills, notably capability to discuss ethical issues and arguments with medical professionals and policy makers
- eagerness to work in a multidisciplinary context.

Preferably (s)he has knowledge of ethical discussions about risk and safety, and some experience with interviews and/or focus group studies.

## We offer:

- salary and conditions are conform CAO Sanquin;
- a 36-hour-week;
- reimbursement of travel expenses;
- a temporary appointment for a period of 1 year, if successful, will be extended to cover 4 years in total;
- working hours are fixed by mutual agreement;
- 8,33% year-end;
- based on full-time employment 201 vacation hours;
- PhD training and supervision according to the regulations of the Netherlands School for Research in Philosophy (Onderzoekschool Wijsbegeerte);
- supervision by professor Hans Zaaijer (Sanquin and University of Amsterdam, Blood-borne Infections) and dr Marcel Verweij (as of May 1st 2013: professor of philosophy, Wageningen University);
- excellent conditions for research in public health ethics: lively debate, enthusiastic colleagues with an international focus, and a fruitful work environment at the Chair

Group Philosophy at Wageningen University and at Sanquin (Amsterdam);

**More information:**

For further information about the project itself you can contact Hans Zaaijer on email:  
h.zaaijer@sanquin.nl

**Application:**

Please return your letter of application, including a curriculum vitae and reference, to application number MK 05-13, preferably digitally via the online application form or via e-mail to [werk@sanquin.nl](mailto:werk@sanquin.nl) Attn. Mrs. M. Uijlings before April 1<sup>st</sup> 2013