



MARIE SKŁODOWSKA-CURIE POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIPS 2023

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR HOSTING MARIE CURIE FELLOWS

HOST INSTITUTION

Nova Institute of Philosophy, Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas, Universidade Nova de Lisboa

RESEARCH GROUP AND URL

Laboratory of Argumentation, Cognition and Language
<https://ifilnova.pt/en/laboratories/arglab/>

SUPERVISOR (NAME AND E-MAIL)

Maria Grazia Rossi
mgrazia.rossi@fcsh.unl.pt

SHORT CV OF THE SUPERVISOR

Maria Grazia Rossi is a research fellow at the Nova Institute of Philosophy and adjunct professor of communication at the Nova School of Social Science and Humanities, Lisbon, Portugal. Her primary research expertise is in health communication, at the intersection between philosophy and communication. Since her Ph.D. (Cognitive Science, 2012), she has been interested in building a theoretical approach to communication and dialogue. She is especially interested in understanding how to improve communication and address issues with strong social and ethical relevance. Her work analyzes various phenomena within medical discourse (doubts, misunderstandings, metaphors, emotions) and in different health contexts (diabetes, reproductive health, rare diseases, cancer, and public health communication). Her current research focuses on managing doubt in healthcare. She looks specifically at the role played by framing strategies (e.g., metaphors, emotive words) as tools fostering shared understanding and decision-making in healthcare communication.

Maria Grazia Rossi is starting a new research program (2023-2029) with the overall objective of using framing strategies to promote the adoption of health attitudes and behaviors for the common well-being. Promoting health messages fostering desirable individual behaviors for the common good is becoming even more challenging in our global and multicultural societies, with continuously emerging ethical dilemmas between individuals, groups, and community values.

She has been teaching philosophy of communication, theory of language, rhetoric and argumentation, communication ethics, and shared decision-making processes. She has served on the Advisory Committee of the International Association for Communication in Healthcare and was Deputy National Representative for Portugal within the same association (2016-2022).

5 SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

- Mohammed, D., & Rossi, M. G. (2022). The Argumentative Potential of Doubt: From Legitimate Concerns to Conspiracy Theories About COVID-19 Vaccines - *The Pandemic of Argumentation*. In S. Oswald, M. Lewiński, S. Greco, & S. Villata (Eds.) (pp. 125–144). Cham: Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-91017-4_7
- Rossi, M. G., Macagno, F., & Bigi, S. (2022). Dialogical functions of metaphors in medical interactions. *Text and Talk*, 42(1), 77–103. <https://doi.org/10.1515/text-2019-0166>
- Rossi, M. G. (2021). Discursive and ethical challenges in healthcare communication. Introduction to the issue on “Rhetoric and Health”. *Rivista Italiana di Filosofia del Linguaggio* 15(1), 1–3. <https://doi.org/10.4396/20210601>
- Rossi, M. G., Vegni, E., & Menichetti, J. (2021). Misunderstandings in ART Triadic Interactions: A Qualitative Comparison of First and Follow-Up Visits. *Frontiers in Psychology*. <https://www.frontiersin.org/article/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.641998>
- Rossi, M. (2021). Metaphors and Persuasion in Healthcare Communication. *Langages*, 222, 59-76. <https://doi.org/10.3917/lang.222.0059>

PROJECT TITLE AND SHORT DESCRIPTION

Project title: Handling Doubt through Framing Strategies in Healthcare Controversies

Short description:

Uncertainty in healthcare is a multifaceted phenomenon that appears in diverse forms and requires different management strategies (Dahm & Crock, 2022; Eachempati et al., 2022; Han, Klein, & Arora, 2011; Han et al., 2021; Kalke, Studd, & Scherr, 2021). Looking at both interpersonal interactions and public discourse, we aim at exploring a specific dimension of uncertainty in health controversies and focus on how doubts are expressed by patients/citizens and managed by healthcare professionals and experts. The basic assumption underlying this project is that addressing doubt is a crucial ethical and discursive practice to prevent hesitancy and distrust toward healthcare authorities. Uncertainty nourishes hesitancy and negatively impacts trustworthy relationships with healthcare authorities on an interpersonal and public basis. Recent analyses show that hesitancy and distrust toward healthcare authorities represent an urgent challenge not simply to contain the influence of conspiracy theories and negationist views but mainly to prevent non-scientific or even anti-scientific opinions will soon become dominant (e.g., anti-vax viewpoints; Johnson et al., 2020), with obvious consequences regarding citizens' social well-being and the healthcare system's sustainability.

This project's theoretical and methodological core will be based on previous preliminary studies we conducted to analyze doubt in public health controversies (Mohammed & Rossi, 2022) and interpersonal healthcare communication (Rossi & Mohammed 2023). We started a preliminary observation of the discursive strategies used by experts and healthcare professionals to implement what we have called a communicative process of doubt legitimization (Rossi & Mohammed, 2023). Such a process makes the hidden concerns behind doubt evident and helps correct potential misunderstandings and misconceptions. Moreover, recognizing the legitimacy of doubt prevents the spread of attitudes that – in the public sphere – might feed group polarization and distrust toward healthcare authorities (Mohammed & Rossi, 2022). Based on this exploratory analysis, we set up a framework for analyzing and managing doubt between patients/citizens and healthcare professionals and experts. More specifically, adopting an argumentative perspective (see also Jackson & Schneider, 2017; Jackson, 2020), we will examine how doubt is expressed and handled in health controversies through framing strategies (Rossi, 2021). We will show how experts can use frames to manage doubts to make health information more compelling and contribute to patients' and citizens' desired change in attitudes and behaviors.

References

- Dahm, M. R., & Crock, C. (2022). Understanding and Communicating Uncertainty in Achieving Diagnostic Excellence. *JAMA*, 327(12), 1127–1128. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2022.2141>
- Eachempati, P., Büchter, R. B., Ks, K. K., Hanks, S., Martin, J., & Nasser, M. (2022). Developing an integrated multilevel model of uncertainty in health care: A qualitative systematic review and thematic synthesis. *BMJ Global Health*, 7(5). <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjgh-2021-008113>
- Han, P. K. J., Klein, W. M. P., & Arora, N. K. (2011). Varieties of Uncertainty in Health Care: A Conceptual Taxonomy. *Medical Decision Making*, 31(6), 828–838. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0272989x11393976>
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- Jackson, Sally. (2020). Evidence in Health Controversies. *OSSA Conference Archive*, 15. Retrieved from <https://scholar.uwindsor.ca/ossaarchive/OSSA12/Friday/15>
- Johnson, N. F., Velásquez, N., Restrepo, N. J., Leahy, R., Gabriel, N., El Oud, S., ... Lupu, Y. (2020). The online competition between pro- and anti-vaccination views. *Nature*, 582(7811), 230–233. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-020-2281-1>
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- Mohammed, D., & Rossi, M. G. (2022). *The Argumentative Potential of Doubt: From Legitimate Concerns to Conspiracy Theories About COVID-19 Vaccines - The Pandemic of Argumentation* (S. Oswald, M. Lewiński, S. Greco, & S. Villata, eds.). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-91017-4_7
- Rossi, M. G. (2021). Metaphors and Persuasion in Healthcare Communication. *Langages*, 222(2), 1–18.



Rossi, M. G., & Mohammed, D. (2023). Exploring the argumentative potential of doubt in medical consultations. Proceedings of the 4th European Conference on Argumentation, Rome 2022. London: College Publications (forthcoming).

SCIENTIFIC AREA WHERE THE PROJECT FITS BEST*

Social Sciences and Humanities (SOC)

***Scientific Area where the project fits best** – Please select/indicate the scientific area according to the panel evaluation areas: Chemistry (CHE) • Social Sciences and Humanities (SOC) • Economic Sciences (ECO) • Information Science and Engineering (ENG) • Environment and Geosciences (ENV) • Life Sciences (LIF) • Mathematics (MAT) • Physics (PHY)