

## SUMMARIES

*Lene Larsen, Line Lauritzen & Maja O'Connor:*

**Complicated grief and prolonged grief disorder - conceptual separation and connection**

The definition of “complicated grief” has long been debated. On the one hand, it has been used to describe a broad range of difficult and prolonged grief reactions following the death of a loved one. That is, reactions like severe and persistent symptoms of grief, physical and psychiatric illnesses, and untimely death. On the other hand, complicated grief has been used to describe a more specific form of pathological grief. This condition has also been called prolonged grief, traumatic grief, and pathological grief. Sometime in 2018, the WHO is due to publish a revised version of the ICD-11, which will likely include a diagnosis of “Prolonged Grief Disorder” (in Danish “Vedvarende Sorglidelse”). This article proposes that complicated grief retains its definition as a broad term, describing grief reactions which do not follow a natural progression but instead become prolonged and impairing. That is, we argue that complicated grief is an “umbrella term” which encompasses maladaptive grief reactions in the form of 1) prolonged grief disorder, 2) loss-related depression, PTSD, and anxiety, and 3) somatic illnesses. We also focus on the current research findings pertaining to the anticipated and more narrow grief diagnosis, “prolonged grief disorder”. We will discuss the proposed diagnostic criteria, how to differentiate it from depression and PTSD, and recommendations for treatment.

*Allan Køster, Ester Holte Kofod, Ditte Winther-Lindqvist, Svend Brinkman & Anders Petersen:*

**Cultural and existential perspectives on experiences of grief and bereavement**

Throughout past decades, research on grief and bereavement has migrated towards a more quantitative research agenda; i.e. scales for identification of normal and complicated grief reactions, symptoms of grief, and the consequences of bereavement on health outcomes, etc. This tendency towards a more quantitative research paradigm has been simultaneous with a noticeable break with traditional theories on grief, which have been criticised for not being eligible for empirical validation. On the productive side, this approach has provided the basis for the emergence of new empirically based models, such as Margaret Stroebe and Henk Schut’s dual-process model of coping with bereavement. While this development in many ways has contributed to a revitalisation of research on grief and bereavement, it is significant to notice that its specific methods and focus does not adequately address important cultural and existential dimensions of grief.

Through The Culture of Grief research project, we specifically aim to address these cultural and existential dimensions on a conceptual and empirical

level. In this article, we present the background for this research agenda and introduce some significant ideas guiding this work. Concretely, we start out by accounting for the process through which research on grief and bereavement has gradually adapted to a quantitative research paradigm. On this background, we then draw out a basic outline of the guiding ideas behind *The Culture of Grief*. Finally, we aim to provide body and concreteness to this by presenting eight theses guiding our various approaches.

*Michael Hviid Jacobsen & Anders Petersen:*

**The Sociality of Grief: a sociologically informed commentary on the psychologisation and medicalisation of human emotions**

Sigmund Freud's ground-breaking work 100 years ago marked the entrance to the 20th century's psychologised approach to grief. Grief research has changed a lot since Freud. However, the development has not shrunk away from the dominant position of psychology in the research on grief. Instead, one can say that psychology has expanded its territory and colonised much of the understanding of grief, which has decimated other languages of grief significantly. Even the realm of religion, which previously offered people comfort and guidance in understanding and dealing with grief, has apparently become "the servant of psychology" (Walter 1996: 123). In this article, we offer a sociological corrective to this development, where we focus on the sociality of grief. We do this by criticising the psychologisation of grief and by unfolding a variety of facets of a sociological/emotional-sociological understanding of grief's sociality, which offers itself as a corrective or supplement to the psychologisation of grief.

*Dorthe Refslund Christensen, Dorte Hvidtjørn, Mathilde Lindh Jørgensen & Kjetil Sandvik:*

**Ritualisation and Parenthood: grief practices among parents after having a stillborn baby**

When a woman in a Danish maternity ward gives birth to a stillborn baby, it is common practice that the health professionals encourage the parents to see and hold the baby. Within empirical research, one will find a number of qualitative and quantitative studies of the significance of such practices regarding the continuous emotional health for the mothers, but many studies are deficient when it comes to representativity and confounding. This article relates to existing research and replenishes with a cross-disciplinary approach, consisting of sociological and cultural analyses of the paradigmatic shift of grief paradigms and the relations to the dead and the meaning of ritualisations, as well as empirical studies of specific grief and everyday life practices carried out by bereaved parents.

The central theme is: what are the interrelations between the practices and interactions initiated by the parents and performed at the maternity wards, in

the home and on online memorial sites, on children's graves and elsewhere and what do they mean to the parents' grief practices in the life to come?

*Kari Dyregrov, Birthe Møgster, Kristine Berg, Hilde-Margit Løseth & Lenart Lorås:*

### **The special grief following drug death bereavement**

Grief, following death, is something people experience and have had to tackle throughout time. Precisely why it is so common or "normal" that unhealthy and complex forms of grief have been relatively neglected in the health services. Trajectories of grief vary strongly for individuals, and for some people, the loss of a close person is experienced as one of life's most stressful events. Research in recent years has shown that unnatural deaths, in particular (for example, resulting from accident, suicide or overdose) can lead to intense suffering and reduce quality of life (complicated grief) over time. This article focuses on the grief of drug death bereaved, an understudied, stigmatised and invisible social group. We discuss the potential for a form of grief in close persons who have feared and struggled to prevent death by overdose. When the death occurs, they can experience that their grief goes unrecognised by society, amongst their own relief, shame, guilt and guilt for feeling relieved. Furthermore, we discuss how the phenomenology of grief is connected to contextual and personal relations and interpersonal processes. Finally, we discuss the contributing factors and the likelihood of a particular form of complicated grief in drug death related bereaved.

*Karina Stengaard Kamp & Helle Spindler:*

### **Bereavement hallucinations or sensory perceptions? An overview and critical discussion of bereaved people's experience of sensing the deceased**

It is common for bereaved people to see, hear, feel or sense the presence of the deceased, yet our knowledge of these experiences is still limited. In particular, little is known about how these experiences influence bereaved people and their adjustment to the loss. However, sensory perception is surrounded by a general taboo among bereaved and professionals alike, which could be part of the reason why these experiences have received limited (research) attention.

At this time, we lack a common language for sensory perceptions of the deceased shared by both laypeople and professionals, and therefore the challenges of finding such a language are discussed. Furthermore, this article will contribute with a critical overview of the current status of this field of research, touching upon the phenomenology, associations to demographic and personal characteristics of the bereaved, as well as associations to the process of grief. Finally, recommendations for addressing grief in the clinic are described.

*Tia G. B. Hansen & Lisa M. Nielsen:*

### **Grief after Companion Animal Bereavement**

Companion animal grief is disenfranchised: when companion or service animals die, most owners experience considerable grief, but most owners also feel strange or stigmatised because they do. Outdated assumptions about human-animal relations could be a cause of this paradox, and the aim of the article is to summarise relevant research in the field and derive suggestions for how to support grieving companion animal owners in Denmark. We first describe grief over companion animals in the context of research on Companion Animal Benefits, the Human-Animal Bond and Attachment Theory. Companion animals serve several functions for their humans; some of these arise when relating to the animal as a unique being, and this makes the animal irreplaceable and grievable in the same way as other objects of attachment. The grief itself seems largely similar to grief after human bereavement, but the disenfranchisement reduces access to social support.

Considering intervention, counselling to bereaved animal owners by default is likely to be counterproductive. Instead, we summarise an American three-tier model (Miller et al., 2014) and suggest adaptations for Danish use. Therapeutic intervention should be offered when professional assessment indicates a need or when clients who are already in therapy lose an animal. In these cases, a Danish adaptation of Miller et al.'s (2014) TALP programme would be relevant. This six-session intervention would focus on grief validation, psycho-education about human-animal relations and grief processes, and support for coping that matches the particular individual's coping style. We conclude that the most pertinent needs in a Danish context are: (1) cultural level dissemination of knowledge about human-animal bonds as healthy and typical, in order to reduce the (self) stigmatisation that may prevent owners from enlisting sources of coping and social support when grieving; (2) updated knowledge about grief and coping processes made available to vet clinics and companion animal owners, in order to exchange popular but unfounded older models that would pathologise normal reactions and thus uphold the stigmatisation; and (3) upgrading psychologists' knowledge about human-animal relations and losses.

**Keywords:** disenfranchised grief; pets; anthrozoology

*Line Thoft Carlsen & Martin Lytje:*

**Research ethics in practice when bereaved children are included in qualitative research**

The consideration of ethics when undertaking studies are a mandatory part of scientific research. National and international ethical codex's offer rules and general guidelines, such as "to do no harm" and the importance of informed consent. But how is this transformed into practice? This article argues that ethical reflections are particularly challenging when exploring the knowledge and experiences of bereaved children who are involved in qualitative research. Three areas of attention are presented, which may complement the research codes of ethics and provide points of reflection for researchers initiating similar studies. It further discusses the importance of including child perspectives despite the ethical challenges that may arise when children are involved. To conclude, three cases from the authors' own research involving children, affected by life-threatening illness and death, exemplify the ethical research challenges that can be met in practice and how these can be met.

*Kirsten K. Roessler, Simon Hoegmark, Henning Eichberg† & Klaus Robering:*

**Nature as a treatment – theoretical considerations on atmosphere, relations, and space. A pilot study.**

Space, nature, relations and atmospheres are phenomena that will be discussed based on the paradigm of environmental psychology. The aim is to investigate, how nature can support health. In general, theoretical considerations on space are followed by a description; how patients with health-related problems profit from being in nature. Even when it is common knowledge, that staying in natural environments is positive, researchers, communities and outdoor instructors seldom work together in an applied research project.

Our paper communicates experiences from a pilot study working with nature as a treatment for men on sick leave caused by stress, pain or chronic disease. The intervention is established as cooperation between Svendborg Municipality and the Naturama museum. The goal is to use nature as an alternative treatment for a group of men who did not profit from other treatment offers from their municipality. Four eight-week courses with a total of 33 participants are described, discussing treatment in nature as new rehabilitation offer especially for men on long-term sick leave.