

**Dr Dikmen Bezmez**

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## **“ ‘Talking for Walking’: Reproducing ‘Body Normality’ in a Turkish Rehabilitation Hospital”**

### **Seminar Presentation 1 – 2pm**

My paper explores discourses around ‘walking’ in a rehabilitation hospital in Turkey. I discuss their impact on in-hospital relationships, patients’ attitudes to disability, and how ‘body normality’ is constructed. This draws on interviews with 29 patients, 11 medical staff, and two non-medical staff. Three categories of discourses emerged. First, hope for walking is kept alive in doctor–patient relationships, either through a keeping silent about this, or emphasising time, determination, and faith in God. Second, patients can gain assurances on retrieving walking, mostly through interactions with fellow patients and family members (*refakatçis*). Third, a possible non-walking future is envisaged, either by framing within a disability rights perspective or by building a case for gratitude. Diverse discourses on walking emerge through the informality of in-hospital practices. Nonetheless, the ‘normal body’ is most likely to be presented as the ‘walking body’. Thus, patients will often refuse being discharged before they regain the ability to walk.

### **Brief Biography:**

Dikmen Bezmez is a sociologist and a Marie Curie Individual Fellow at Norwich Medical School, at the University of East Anglia. She is also an Assistant Professor of Sociology at Koc University, Istanbul. Her research interests lie in combining sociological theory with health research, with a particular focus on disability. She is currently undertaking research that explores social experiences of physical in-patient rehabilitation.

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