

You are kindly invited to the public defense to obtain the degree of

## DOCTOR OF PSYCHOLOGY

of drs. Aurore Roland

Which will take place on  
June 22nd, 2-4pm CET  
Promotiezaal D2.01 – [VUB Main Campus Brussels](#)  
Pleinlaan 2 – 1050 Brussel  
Or if you wish to attend online, click here to [join the meeting](#)

## SWEET DREAMS AREN'T MADE OF THIS...: INSOMNIA, NIGHTMARES & THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

### CHAIR

**Prof. Dr. Jasmine Vergauwe (VUB)**

### PROMOTORS

**Prof. Dr. Olivier Mairesse (VUB)**  
**Prof. Dr. Giovanni Briganti (Umons)**

### JURY

#### INTERN:

**Prof. Dr. Tim Vantilborgh (VUB)**  
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#### EXTERN:

**Prof. Dr. An Mariman (UGent)**  
**Prof. Dr. Tessa Blanken (UvA)**

Coming by car? Please [register your licence plate](#) in advance to have access to the campus.

You are also invited to the reception afterwards.

Please confirm your attendance at the latest on Wednesday June 17th via by filling out this form:  
[forms.office.com/e/cc91YYqd8r](https://forms.office.com/e/cc91YYqd8r)

## SUMMARY

Due to the threat posed by the SARS-COV-2 virus, governments implemented drastic measures to protect public health. However, the pandemic and its associated circumstances negatively affected the mental health of the general population and also impacted sleep. This thesis starts out by an investigation of sleep during the COVID-19 pandemic to later focus on the topic of nightmares. Investigation happened through online surveys, a meta-analysis, a scoping review and a case report. Insomnia increased during the first lockdown (19.22%) compared with the pre-COVID period (7-8%), with a further increase observed during the second lockdown (28.91%). Individuals also delayed their bedtimes and rise times, particularly adolescents and young adults, a pattern resembling social jetlag. Nightmares emerged as being conditionally dependent on other symptoms in the network and may therefore reflect either underlying psychopathology or a broader pathological trait such as neuroticism ( $z = 0.30, p < .001$ ). Given their role as both a predictor of mental disorders and a disruptor of sleep, the treatment of nightmares is clinically relevant and may positively affect comorbid psychiatric symptoms.

## CURRICULUM VITAE

Drs. Aurore Roland is a clinical psychologist and expert in behavioural sleep medicine. Aside from her research, she treats individuals with insomnia and nightmares and is the author of the book 'Wat dromen ons (niet) vertellen'. She is also frequently invited by the media to discuss dreams.