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Are we solving the right problem? How Operations Research can make a difference in healthcare

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Healthcare faces increasingly complex challenges, from scarce capacity and rising demand to growing waiting lists and high turnover. Operations Research has the potential to make a real difference, but are we solving the right problems? In this talk, I will share examples in healthcare operations, illustrating how understanding the problem, developing OR solutions, and learning from implementation can lead to meaningful impact. From operating room scheduling to digital care and neonatal capacity, we will explore how we can support the move towards better healthcare. And why, sometimes, finding the right problem is the hardest puzzle of all.

Dr. Gréanne Leeftink is an Associate Professor in the Industrial Engineering and Management Science department at the University of Twente, staff member of the Center for Healthcare Operations Improvement and Research (CHOIR) at the University of Twente, and researcher at Isala hospitals in Zwolle. Her research focuses on optimizing healthcare processes and resource allocation under uncertainty, with a particular emphasis on improving the efficiency, accessibility, and quality of healthcare delivery.