

Cees Smit, *Een nieuwe horizon. De toekomst van de patiëntenbeweging in Nederland* [A new horizon. The future of the patients' movement in the Netherlands]. Hoogwoud: Kirjaboek. 166 pp. € 15.00. ISBN 978-94-6008-135-4. The book can be obtained in bookshops and via www.kirjaboek.nl. The proceeds are for the Vereniging Samenwerkende Ouder en Patiëntenorganisatie (VSOP) [Association of Cooperating Organizations of Older People and Patients].

The Netherlands has a long tradition of patients' organizations that play an increasingly important role in policy-making, practical care and research concerning (chronically) ill, disabled and older people. The author of this overview of the Dutch patients' movement, who is a haemophilia patient, has been involved in this work, from the very beginning. In 1971, at the age of twenty, he joined the society for haemophilia patients and has remained active ever since. He believes that the patients' movement now stands at a crossroads. In addition to providing information, organizing contact between peers and advocacy, a fourth opportunity has arisen: patient participation in research about the needs and experiences of patients (cf. the 2004 special issue of this journal about 'The patient as co-researcher'). This little book can be regarded as taking stock before moving forward towards research participation.

The author first describes the Dutch patients' organizations, the financing, and the consequences of recent policy changes by the Ministry of Health. Next he considers the chances for a new strategy in the coming years. In the third chapter, Smit describes in detail how individual patients, their partners and others in their environment, together with patients' organizations, can play a more leading role in both cure and care issues. In the subsequent chapter, he focuses on how patients' organisations can have more influence on the development of pharmaceuticals—a hot issue in the patients' movement. Finally, Smit evaluates the present situation, how various parties (researchers, industry, policy-makers and patient) relate to each other. In this final chapter, he describes the 'new horizon' for Dutch patients' organizations.

This informative little book is an indispensable guide for everyone working in or with patients' organizations in the Netherlands.

Sjaak van der Geest, Medical Anthropology
University of Amsterdam