



## COLLOQUIUM SERIES

### European Doctoral School of Demography

**Tuesday, April 12<sup>th</sup> – 2 p.m.**

Aula Fanfani (Sapienza Università di Roma, Via del Castro Laurenziano 9, Roma -  
Facoltà di Economia, 5th floor)

**Aline Désesquelles**

(Senior researcher at the Institut National d'Etudes Démographiques, Paris and former  
EDSD's Dean)

### *Analysing multiple causes of death: how and what for?*

Abstract: In 1940 Theodore Janssen, the then Chief of the Nosology Section at the Division of Vital Statistics of the US Bureau of the Census wrote: "statistics showing combinations of causes come nearer the truth than do those based on the single cause principle because the majority of deaths actually result from a combination of causes". More than 70 years later, cause-specific mortality analysis is still primarily achieved on the basis of the underlying cause of death. Yet, multiple cause-of-death (MCO) data are increasingly produced and disseminated by statistical offices. In 2007, together with France Meslé (Ined), I initiated research activities with colleagues from La Sapienza Università di Roma and from the Italian statistical office (Istat) in order to explore how and what for this data could be used. In the light of this experience, my presentation aims at explaining why we believe that the cause-specific mortality analysis should not be restricted to the underlying cause of the death but also consider all contributing causes. I will illustrate this point with examples from our most recent research.