

CRIR Scientific Conference

Presented by: Jewish Rehabilitation Hospital (JRH),
Santé Québec Laval



Centre de recherche interdisciplinaire
en réadaptation du Montréal métropolitain

As part of the "Talking Research" series | Presentations by researchers or postdoctoral fellows on the findings of their research projects

Singularity as key concept to critique medical and social models and implement human rights model of disability



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Bio: A lawyer with a Master's degree in law and a trained ethnologist, Pierre Margot-Cattin is a Professor at the Valais School of Social Work, part of the University of Applied Sciences of Western Switzerland (HES-SO/Valais). He served as Chair of the Swiss Council for Equality and Disability for five years. An expert on issues relating to disability, he is particularly interested in the impact of social representations on this concept and in the conceptualisation and modelling of the notion of disability. He has also developed expertise in human rights and fundamental rights, specifically in relation to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. For two consecutive years, he served as an expert for the Swiss delegation at the Conference of States Parties to that convention. A keen globetrotter, he particularly enjoys discovering new horizons and diverse cultures. Born with a significant physical disability, he is married and the father of two boys.

Conference abstract

Through an approach that is at once philosophical, socio-critical and experiential, this lecture offers a discussion of the limitations of medical and social models of understanding disability. It seeks to demonstrate how the shift from a social model of disability to a human rights-based approach leads to placing the individuality of people back at the heart of support policies and practices. From this perspective, universal design emerges as a genuine societal project, aimed at devising environments capable of accommodating the diversity of human lives. Conversely, mere regulatory accessibility – often based on implicit standards of normality – quickly reveals its limitations. The conference thus argues that the key issue for effective social participation lies not merely in infrastructure complying with accessibility standards, but in its actual usability by individual people, whose needs, abilities and ways of being are profoundly diverse.

Date et heure : October 20, 2026
12:00 - 13:00

Contact : Mireia.Carrillo.cissslav@ssss.gouv.qc.ca

Langue : English, Bilingual discussion

Modality : Hybride

■ **In person:** Jewish Rehabilitation Hospital, Research main area

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or

■ **Virtual:** On Zoom. Please register:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/join/join?j=J9MYjgaJRKqd5sluTuXJYQ>