Passing-by “Ça va?” checks in clinic corridors

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Abstract: We have conducted a video-based field study on work interactions between staff members in the corridors of a hospital outpatient clinic in the French-speaking part of Switzerland. In this paper, we examine a specific mobile interactional configuration: passing-by interactions in which staff members get involved as they walk following close and parallel trajectories going in opposite directions. We also examine a specific conversational activity performed in the corridors: checks – introduced by the French expression "*Ça va?*" (Going okay?) – with which one staff member verifies that the situation of a colleague conforms to a routine state of affairs. Adopting the approaches of multimodal and conversation analysis, we point out features of the interactional configuration and the conversational activity under consideration that participants combine in some excerpts analyzed in the paper. Passing-by checks are practically accomplished, on the spot, through the sequential, embodied and embedded conduct of the staff members. We identify resources involved in building close but non-convergent trajectories, limiting interactional involvement, and coordinating talk and walk for a fleeting co-presence. The article contributes to the study of "on-the-move" contingent interactions as they happen in hospital corridors.

Keywords: multimodal conversation analysis, passing-by interaction, "goingokay" (*Ça va?*) check, hospital corridor conversation, mobility

1 Introduction

Concomitantly to the development of the "mobility paradigm" in the social sciences (Sheller and Urry 2006), researchers in the fields of conversation analysis and

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multimodal interaction analysis have revisited and expanded pioneering work on "walking-and-interacting" in naturally-occurring situations (Haddington et al. 2013; McIlvenny et al. 2009; Relieu 1999). They have thus examined the interactional resources participants deploy when walking in shared spaces, a concerted accomplishment requiring them to mutually adjust to one another (Psathas 1976; Ryave and Schenkein 1974). Following this trend, this article takes up the question of how individuals interact while moving around in a clinical setting, articulating talk and bodily conduct *in situ* and in real time to produce ordinary activities.

"Mobility work" is crucial for hospital staff to access necessary resources for their activities, whether people, knowledge, or tools (Bardram and Bossen 2005). Operating in a shared distributed space, hospital staff carry out interdependent tasks that demand constant "articulation work" (Strauss 1988). While moving through corridors and other liminal spaces, they engage in "highly dynamic, quite economic and carefully targeted communications" (Long et al. 2007: 198) that contribute to work progress and coordination. However, research on language and social interaction in clinical settings has so far mainly concentrated on pre-scheduled, predominantly static encounters taking place in closed spaces (Pilnick et al. 2009). To extend the scope of research, Hindmarsh and Pilnick (2002: 162) have suggested exploring the different kinds of "embodied, embedded, real-time interactional dynamics" at work in clinical teams.

Following this suggestion, we conducted a video-based field study (Heath et al. 2010) on staff interactions in the corridors of a hospital outpatient clinic. In this article, we examine two different phenomena as well as how they combine in specific instances. The first phenomenon is an interactional configuration occurring recurrently in the clinic corridors: passing-by interactions in which staff members walk in close, parallel and opposite trajectories. The second phenomenon is a conversational activity also taking place in the corridors: "goingokay" checks initiated by the French expression "*Ça va?*" – which literally translates to 'It goes?' – with which one staff member verifies that the situation of a co-worker is conforming to a routine state of affairs. Adopting the approaches of multimodal and conversation analysis (Streeck et al. 2011), we identify features of the interactional configuration and the conversational activity as well as how these two phenomena combine resulting in passing-by "*Ça va?*" checks. These checks are practically produced, on the spot, through sequential, embodied, and embedded social conduct. We identify resources involved in coordinating close but non-convergent trajectories, limiting interactional involvement, and coordinating talk and walk to create a fleeting co-presence. We pay particular attention to the precision of the timing in the coordination of the verbal and body resources that shape mutual attention and interactional involvement in a visual-spatial environment that rapidly changes as participants pass by each other (Broth and Mondada

2013; De Stefani and Mondada 2007). We analyze checks formally as well as functionally, thus specifying the work they achieve as a constitutive part of organizational conduct in the studied clinical setting. Performed as staff members come across each other in the corridors, checks are a rapid and flexible resource for showing interest or concern for a co-worker's situation, and sharing any relevant information pertaining to it, yet without stopping their movement through the clinic. Checks are therefore an especially valuable communicative resource in a fast-paced, time-critical work environment (Randell et al. 2010).

2 Setting, methods, and data

The setting of our research project is an outpatient clinic in a 56-bed acute-care hospital in the French-speaking part of Switzerland. At the time, the clinic was operating thirteen hours per day, seven days per week. It provided scheduled services (wound-dressing consultations, follow-up orthopedic consultations and outpatient treatment at a day hospital) as well as unscheduled services (non-life-threatening emergencies). The staff included the head physician, a head nurse, several interns, residents and fellows, nurses, nurses' aides and nursing assistants, nursing students, and the clinic secretary. Some of them were administratively appointed to the clinic, while others were hospital personnel who worked in different departments on a rotating or occasional basis. Inside the clinic, the various rooms (22 in total) were served by two long, parallel double-loaded corridors (A and C) connected in the middle and at the ends by shorter corridors (see Figure 1). Some staff members were assigned for the day to a specific workstation – for instance, the day hospital or the urgent care room – but usually ended up working in other rooms as well, to cover for colleagues during breaks for example. Most of them moved around in the clinic extensively to accompany patients, assist colleagues, or access the people, records, and equipment necessary for their tasks.

We carried out a video-based field study (Heath et al. 2010) involving audiovisual recordings of activities taking place in the clinic's corridors and liminal spaces supplemented by in-depth observations, informal interviews, documentation collection, and staff movement measurements. The recordings were made over the course of seven consecutive days, twelve hours per day, using a complex technical set-up placed in the corridors of the clinic. We used four HD video cameras suspended from the ceiling with internal microphones, eight wireless microphones suspended from wall light fixtures, and a reception/mixing/editing station placed at one end of Corridor A (see Figure 1).

The 331 h of video recordings collected in this way (the H-MIC corpus) bear witness to activities taking place in Corridors A, B, and C of the clinic, as people

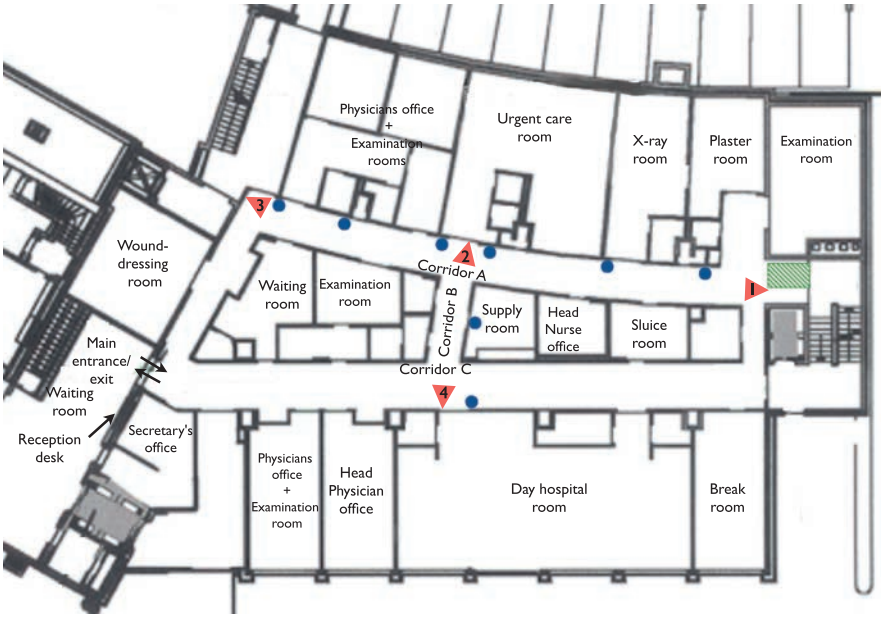


Figure 1: Clinic premises and recording set-up. The triangles represent the video cameras, the dots the wireless microphones, and the striped rectangle the reception/mixing/editing station. Corridor A is 27.40 meters long, Corridor B (the section between Corridors A and C) 4.16 meters long, and Corridor C 31.50 meters long.

walk around and enter and exit the adjacent rooms, as well as activities in the entrance area of the day hospital and the urgent care room. The video recordings captured by the four cameras were synchronized with each other as well as with the audio recordings in Final Cut Pro® multi-cam files. The resulting data makes it possible to track participants as they move from one place to another in the clinic. With respect to the images, we can examine a single development from different perspectives by switching camera angles. With respect to the sound, we can ensure that we clearly hear whatever the participants may be saying as they walk down the corridors by switching between the audio tracks corresponding to the various microphones installed at different points along their way. Switching between audio tracks also allows us to grasp how something said in one part of the clinic could be heard in another.

Following the research protocol agreed upon with the hospital board, we kept only the footage of the clinic staff and six other members of the hospital personnel who visited it recurrently and had also given voluntary oral informed consent, as well as the footage of three members of the research team (37 individuals in total). Using the Studiocode® software package, we coded all the

video recordings, looking for moments in which one or more individuals were occupying the corridors and other interstitial spaces (n = 7,506 in total). We performed multimodal and conversation analysis of extensive sections of this material, which is indexed in a database that includes 467 events so far. The goal was to understand how individuals act and interact together, relying on talk and/or bodily conduct as well as spatial resources (Streeck et al. 2011). We transcribed talk using the conventions developed by Jefferson (2004).

Analysis of the H-MIC corpus shows that staff members frequently occupy the corridors and engage in a variety of "in-passing" interactional configurations while on the move (González-Martínez et al. 2016). By the term "interactional configuration," we specifically refer to a spatial-orientational arrangement of interacting bodies as studied by Kendon (1973) and more recently by Mondada (2009), among others.[1] For instance, in our corpus, participants interact while crossing paths with one another, while converging on a common spot, while one participant passes by another who stands still, or while walking in parallel and close trajectories going in opposite directions, a specific configuration we call "passing-by interactions." While passing by each other, participants engage in diverse conversational activities: greetings and farewells, social niceties like well-wishing, jokes, informings, and noticings. They also accomplish checks – a conversational activity we have broadly defined as oriented to verifying that something is indeed the case.

When examining the events listed in our database, our attention was drawn to 5 excerpts in which the participants of a passing-by interaction performed a check initiated by the French interrogative expression "*Ça va?*" [It goes?]: an expression constituting the first turn-at-talk. As explained later on in the article, "*Ça va?*" adopts different meanings depending on its context of use; this is the reason why, for the time being, we provide only a literal translation, in square brackets, of this and similar expressions. Additional examination of our database led us to identify 13 additional excerpts featuring the same conversational activity – a "*Ça va?*" check – in other interactional configurations (while converging on a common spot, while crossing paths, or while one participant is standing and another passes by). We thus have a set of 18 "*Ça va?*" checks in total.

"*Ça va?*" checks are an understudied activity that features an interrogative expression that is better documented as part of another conversational activity: conversational openings. In order to characterize the 18 "*Ça va?*" checks of interest to us, we contrasted them with a set of 16 excerpts, also extracted from our database, in which a "*Ça va?*" question is produced immediately following

1 By referring exclusively to body arrangements, the term thus points to a narrower array of features than "contextual configuration" (Goodwin 2000), which encompasses the participants' spatially situated bodies as well as elements of their material environment and their talk-in-interaction.

one or more greetings during conversational openings (performed in a variety of interactional configurations). In the first set, the verbal exchange thus starts with the "*Ça va?*" question; in the second, the question follows verbal greetings.

This article is structured in order to first discuss the interactional configuration that constitutes our first phenomenon of interest: interacting in a passing-by configuration. We will then discuss our second phenomenon of interest – the understudied "*Ça va?*" checks – by contrasting them with the already well-documented post-greeting "*Ça va?*" questions. Finally, we will provide detailed multimodal analysis of instances in which our two phenomena of interest – the passing-by interactional configuration and the "*Ça va?*" check conversational activity – operate together resulting in passing-by "*Ça va?*" checks.

3 Passing-by interactions

Most of the literature on passing-by interactions focuses on behavior in public, urban spaces. Goffman's (1966 [1963]) analysis of the transition between unfocused and focused interaction comprises numerous references to pedestrians passing by each other in the street. In this situation, civil inattention, a form of unfocused interaction, involves participants eyeing each other while still at a distance, acknowledging each other's presence and mutual perception, apportioning the street space, and looking down as they finally approach and pass by each other (1966 [1963]: 84). Goffman (1971) also argues that pedestrians maintain a "scanning or check-out area" in front of themselves. As they perceive another person entering the area, they perform a "body check" of the person, with a brief glance, at a moment when they can still deftly modify their trajectory (1971: 12). Pedestrians can also opt to ostentatiously display their trajectory, attract the other pedestrian's gaze, and make sure that the person has seen them, thus engaging in what Goffman calls "checked-body-check" (1971: 12). The approach comprises two key moments: the "critical sign" that "allows the individual to discover what it is the other proposes to do" (1971: 13) and the "establishment point" at which both parties acknowledge that they acknowledge having exchanged critical signs (1971: 13). Pedestrians move from an unfocused to a focused interaction when they fix their attention on each other, maintaining an "eye-to-eye ecological huddle," and produce opening moves: an invitation to engage in reciprocal interaction that is responded to with a "clearance sign" like a friendly glance of recognition or a greeting; these moves result in a "state of ratified mutual participation," even if very brief (Goffman 1966 [1963]).

Taking Goffman's work as a basis, Sobel and Lillith (1975) identify a strong norm of bilateral accommodation for pedestrian behavior. Pedestrians passing by each other minimize the risk of collision by keeping to the right and by observing

approaching persons' faces or lines of gaze in addition to their body movements (Collett and Marsh 1981). To prevent frontal collision, pedestrians veer around each other using detour and angling practices at distances that depend on density of street occupation (Wolff 1973). Unacquainted individuals who pass by each other in public spaces produce avoidance displays, and sometimes even disaffiliative non-verbal behaviors like grim expressions (Givens 1981). Knowles (1972) argues that dyads react with grumbles, sneers or warnings addressed to an oncoming pedestrian to prevent invasion of personal space. Nevertheless, on the basis of series of still pictures of pedestrians passing by each other, Cary (1978, 1979) concludes that there is no significant difference, in terms of head position, gaze orientation, or facial expression, between a pedestrian walking through a space alone or passing by another pedestrian, thus contradicting Goffman's notion of civil inattention.

Kendon and colleagues have examined in detail the behaviors – such as sighting another person, catching his or her eye, smiling, giving clearance – participants adopt as they walk toward one another and create a joint transactional space (Kendon and Ferber 1973; Ciolek and Kendon 1990). Adopting an ethnomethodological perspective, Ryave and Schenkein (1974) study walking in a public space as a methodic and concerted cultural practice constitutive of this very type of social space. Sudnow (1972) points out that pedestrian and automobile circulation requires producing appearances that should be understandable by anybody, at any moment, at a single glance. Psathas (1976) distinguishes "mobility" – independent travel from one place to another, "orientation" – knowing where we are in relation to relevant objects and places in mobility situations, and "navigation" – moving with a purpose from a starting point to a destination.

Drawing on these lines of work, Relieu (1996) studies how pedestrians create and maintain reciprocal distances, for instance when forming parallel lanes on the sidewalk, following a principle of minimization of mutual adjustments. He also analyzes greetings exchanged in corridors or over telepresence technology as displays of readiness to engage in interaction (Relieu 2007). Liberman (2013) identifies methods, such as exchanging glances and "doing oblivious," that drivers and pedestrians deploy to achieve a crossing in an avenue intersection. For Mondada (2009), pedestrians evolve into co-participants in a way-finding activity through the constitution and transformation of a common interactional space adjusted to the activity. Finally, Mortensen and Hazel (2014) investigate the differences between engaging in interaction with an unknown person one passes by in the street and with a person, such as a front desk clerk, whose function is precisely to respond to inquiries from unknown customers. In conclusion, the literature has focused on various resources – like articulation of gaze and/or facial expressions with talk and/or walking behavior, shifting of trajectories, and management of mutual distances – used mostly by pedestrians interacting in the street. In our study, we examine

whether these resources are at work when the outpatient clinic's co-workers produce a specific form of mobile encounter – a passing-by interaction – in what is a semi-public interior space.

4 "*Ça va?*" questions

When studying nurses' communication with other clinicians, Grosjean and Lacoste (1999) identified extremely brief exchanges (questions, informings, instructions or offers of help), going right to the point, that staff produced when coming across each other. Woloshynowych et al. (2007) found that hospital physicians communicating with other staff members while moving around got involved in requests, informings, and instructions. Long et al. (2007) found that clinicians share information, give and receive instructions, and make decisions in the corridors, discussing a variety of clinical, technological, organizational, affective, and reflexive matters in these interactions. To our knowledge, "checks" – a conversational activity specifically oriented to verifying that something is the case – among co-workers in clinical settings have not yet been studied. Moreover, the few existing conversation analytic studies specifically examining the activity of checking focus mainly on instructional contexts. This is for instance the case with "understanding-checks" initiated with questions like "You got it?" or "Is it clear?," that come at the end of classroom instructional sequences as a last move before activity closing (Waring 2012). Watermeyer and Penn (2009) focus on similar checks performed by pharmacists when giving patients medicine dosage instructions. Sert (2013) examines "epistemic status checks" that a teacher produces following a student's display of insufficient knowledge. Another form of studied check is performed to verify that the necessary conditions for a technology-mediated encounter – like a videoconference meeting – are met, often during the opening phase of the encounter (Mondada 2007); see also Bonu (2006, 2007) and Licoppe and Morel (2014).

In the H-MIC corpus, we identified numerous instances of corridor exchanges oriented from the start, and sometimes exclusively, to verifying that things conform to a routine state of affairs; we refer to them with the generic term "goingokay" checks. To initiate them, speakers use French interrogative expressions like "*Ça va?*" [It goes?], "*Ça marche?*" [It functions?], or "*Ça joue?*" [It plays?]. Further investigation would be required to determine the subtle differences that may exist between these check questions; some – like "*Ça va?*" – may refer to the recipient's specific situation, while others – like "*Ça marche?*" – may be used to check that things in general are going okay. We have also discerned variations in the prosodic features of the "*Ça va?*" checks, the pragmatic significance of which only further investigation with larger data sets would make clear. As stated in Section 2, for the

time being, we concentrate on a set of 18 checks initiated with a "*Ça va?*" question that constitute the first turn-at-talk. In order to identify their specificity, we started by comparing them with another set of 16 excerpts of conversational openings in which the same expression comes not in first position but immediately following greetings. "*Ça va?*" is indeed a very common informal expression in French conversation (Peeters 1999; Javeau 1996), functioning as a type of "howareyou" utterance (Sacks 1975; Schegloff 1986). We will first examine this use of the expression and subsequently focus on its use as a check.

4.1 Post-greeting "*Ça va*?" questions

Sacks (1975) notes that greetings occur at the beginning of a conversation; the absence of a first greeting is notable, as is the absence of a second greeting in response to a first one. A "howareyou" question usually follows the exchange of greetings but can also function as a "greeting substitute," taking the place of a greeting at the very beginning of the conversation. An exchange of "howareyous" can constitute a minimal proper conversation the same way that an exchange of greetings does (1975: 69). "How are you?" projects an answer in terms of a value state – positive, negative or neutral – describing the recipient's personal state at the time of the inquiry: something that the answerer knows on his or her own behalf (1975: 72). Following a neutral value description, such as "Fine," no further inquiry is necessary. In contrast, a negative value description, such as "Lousy," makes a "diagnostic sequence" (initiated for instance with the question "Why?") relevant to explain such an answer; a similar procedure may get underway in the case of an extremely positive answer such as "Wonderful!." Answerers are responsible for delivering a response that the asker can handle at the time of the conversation (1975: 73). Sacks concludes that the answerer's orientation to the sequential implications of his or her response may lead him or her to give a neutral value response irrespective of what he or she considers to be his or her actual personal state. According to Schegloff (1986), "howareyou" questions following greetings are a routine part of the openings of ordinary telephone calls. They are usually reciprocated, thus forming an "exchange sequence" (1986: 130): A addresses a first "howareyou" to B, who responds and, in turn, addresses a second one to A. As they precede the introduction of the reason for the call, "howareyou" sequences provide an early opportunity to make some current personal state a matter of topical talk (1986: 118). Speakers subtly design their inquiries and answers both lexically and prosodically to indicate that there may or alternatively may not be something noteworthy to tell (see also Jefferson 1980 on "trouble-premonitory" inquiries and responses).

Studies on conversational openings nonetheless evidence considerable differences in the shaping of "howareyou" sequences, even between conversations produced in the same language (Pillet-Shore 2008; Taleghani-Nikazm 2002). In interactions in French, a "howareyou"-type question may or may not be absent, pro forma, reciprocated, reiterated, and lead to in-depth talk. André-Larochebouvy (1984) calls "*Ça va?*" and equivalent "howareyou" expressions "*salutations complémentaires*" (additional greetings), and notes that they follow greetings or substitute for them, and also open the door to topic-related talk. Kerbrat-Orecchioni (1994) argues that these expressions have an intermediate status between questions and greetings, their concrete value depending on cultural and practical contexts of use. Traverso (1996) notes that during the opening of visits to relatives and friends in France, a "*Ça va*?" question is often reiterated: the first occurrence is more ritual than the second, which aims to obtain a real answer regarding how the person is doing. In formal conversations in French produced in Cameroon, "howareyou"-type questions are a prerogative of the speaker with the superior status, concern not only the recipient but also members of his or her social circle, and are considered as real requests for information (Mulo Farenkia 2009). During Algerian radio shows in French, the listener calling the host always responds positively to his or her "howareyou"-type question and often produces a reciprocal one to which the host however tends not to respond (Yahiaoui 2010). Béal and Traverso (2010) compare the openings of social visits between friends speaking Australian English to those of friends speaking French. When a "howareyou"-type question occurs in the first case, the preferred response is a minimal positive answer accompanied by thanks; the question is rarely reciprocated or reiterated. In the second, the question is never followed by thanking and is often reciprocated (which leads to a new exchange) and reiterated. These results conform to Peeters' (1999) claims that the phaticity of "How are you?" in Australian English is higher than that of "*Ça va?*" in French conversations.[2] That said, our purpose is not to discuss the organization of conversational openings in the French language in-depth. We will only make a few observations on our data featuring post-greeting "*Ça va?*" questions as a basis to start characterizing the "*Ça va?*" checks that constitute our main focus.

In the out-patient clinic, staff members greet each other the first time they meet during the day's work. Greetings, like goodbyes at the end of the day, function as access rituals marking a change in degree of mutual access (Goffman 1971). In these cases, greetings are routinely followed by reciprocal sequences bringing into play "*Ça va?*" utterances. Together, they may either

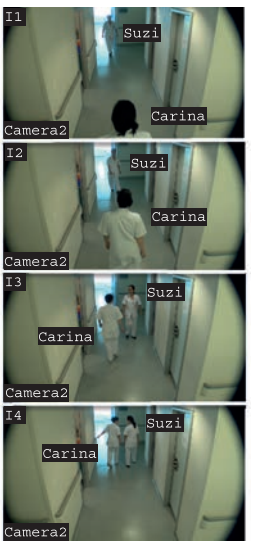
2 Coupland et al. (1992) examine scripted "How are you?" questions in health-related interviews with elderly people in the United Kingdom – an activity and sequential phenomena that are rather different from those under consideration here.

constitute the opening of an extended unit of talk or the only elements of a minimal but proper conversation. Excerpts 1 and 2 show instances of post-greeting "*Ça va?*" questions that we translated as "Doing okay?." The excerpts reproduce the initial moves of two by-product conversations (Schegloff 2004) among nursing staff coming together in the clinic corridors. We have transcribed the talk and supplemented the transcripts with a few images extracted from the video clips of the excerpts since the focus in this Section 4.1 is on the sequential and functional organization of the talk. We have inserted superscript references in the transcript at the points corresponding to the images reproduced alongside it. The position of the reference indicates whether the action represented in the image takes place at the beginning or at the end of the word or period of silence marked in the transcript. See Figure 1 for the position of the camera. There is no talk between the interlocutors before the first turn-at-talk in Excerpt 1 nor in Excerpt 2.

In Excerpt 1, Suzi, a clinic nurse, comes out of the day hospital and starts walking in the direction of the urgent care room at the same time that Carina, a clinic aide, is walking in the opposite direction (I1). As both co-workers are about to enter Corridor B, Carina greets Suzi (line 2), who simultaneously produces an identical greeting token. Then Suzi utters a "*Ça va?*" question (line 5) that Carina responds to and returns to her colleague. As Suzi responds, she makes a U-turn enabling the two co-workers to start walking side-by-side in the direction of the urgent care room, as Carina introduces a first topic of conversation (line 9, I4).

Excerpt 1: 507_22A_013329

1		[I1](0.7)
2	Car:	[I2](oh:) [sa:↑lut:]
		oh hi
3	Suz:	[sa↑lut:]
		hi
4		(0.7)
5	Suz:	[I3]>ça va?<
		doing okay
6	Car:	ça ↑va ↓et toi?
		doing okay and you
7	Suz:	ou(h)i: °hihhihhih°
		yes heeheehee
8		(0.3)
9	Car:	[I4](j'trouve) que tu faisais (l')↑soir
		I thought that you were doing the evening



In Excerpt 2, Mila, a clinic nurse, is walking down Corridor C in the direction of the break room (I1, person in the background). Christine, another clinic nurse, who is also in Corridor C but far behind Mila and out of the camera's range, greets her (line 2). Mila makes a U-turn, stops when in front of the door of the day hospital and greets Christine in return (line 4). Then the co-workers produce a "*Ça va?*" exchange sequence, initiated by Christine in line 5, as Christine walks down Corridor C in Mila's direction. In line 12, Mila introduces a first topic of conversation; Christine responds as she appears on screen and is about to reach her colleague in front of the day hospital (line 13, I5).

Excerpt 2: 321_21A_022221

1		[I1](0.3)
2	Chi:	[I2]<salut Mila
		hi Mila
3		(1.7)
4	Mil:	[I3]↑sa:lut
		hi
5	Chi:	[I4]ça va?=
		doing okay
6	Mil:	=>ça va et ↑toi?<
		doing okay and you
7	Chi:	(>pas de pro↑blè:me<) nickel
		no problem awesome
8		(1.0)
9	Chi:	°super:°
		super
10		(0.3)
11	Chi:	°j'suis en forme°
		I feel great
12	Mil:	<tu sais que San est malade?
		you know that San is sick
13	Chi:	qui:?[I5]
		who

In both excerpts, an interrogative "*Ça va?*" question (line 5) follows the exchange of greetings. The utterance initiates a "howareyou"-like sequence followed by first-topic talk. Even though they both occupy a similar sequential position, the "*Ça va?*" question differs from a "How" question like "*Comment vas-tu*?." It is a polar question that projects a response accepting or rejecting the implied "doing okay" claim rather than the production of a value description. In

our data, the most common response, by far, is an affirmative repetition "*Ça va*," as in line 6 of Excerpts 1 and 2. Nevertheless, descriptive tokens are also found in the response position, like in Excerpt 2, lines 7 to 11. Otherwise, a post-greeting "*Ça va?*" utterance is similar to a "How are you?" utterance in the sense that they are both oriented to the recipient's personal state. The recipient is asked if he or she is doing okay and not if things are going okay, a difference that we have made clear in our English translation. This is particularly visible in the return question that routinely follows these utterances: "*Et toi?*" (And you?) referring to the recipient. See line 6 in Excerpts 1 and 2, as well as the response in Excerpt 2, lines 7 to 11, in which Christine states that she is in full form, thus clearly describing her own personal state. Like for "How are you?" questions, an answer conveying that there is nothing unusual in the recipient's personal state is a preferred response (Sacks 1987) that advances the course of action in progress. Namely, it projects that talk on that topic is not to be taken further and immediately clears the way for the return question of the exchange sequence or the introduction of an unrelated first topic of conversation (Schegloff 1986). In this sense, in Excerpt 2, Mila may be using silence (lines 8 and 10) to resist turning Christine's reportedly plethoric well-being into a "matter of joint priority concern" (Schegloff 1986: 118).

4.2 "*Ça va?*" check questions

Throughout the day, staff members repeatedly engage in talk with the same colleagues again and again, as they run into each other in the corridors and clinic rooms, without the need to start by exchanging greetings again each time. This is consistent with findings showing that contingent face-to-face workplace conversations are rarely preceded by greetings or followed by farewells (Isaacs et al. 1997) as well as with observations by Goffman (1966 [1963]) and Duranti (1997) on the distinct greeting practices of acquainted people who recurrently run into each other in a shared space. The "*Ça va?*" check questions of interest for this paper are the initial turn of a new spate of talk during a day's work, some of these spates consisting of a single adjacency pair sequence. We translate them as "Going okay?," thus marking a contrast with the post-greeting "*Ça va?*" examined in the previous Section 4.1 and translated as "Doing okay?." Excerpts 3 and 4 are examples of such "*Ça va?*" checks produced in different "in-passing" interactional configurations. As in the previous section, we focus on the sequential organization of talk and supplement

the transcript with a few images extracted from the corresponding video clips to provide a basic representation of participants' moves. See Figure 1 for the position of the cameras.

Excerpt 3 reproduces a brief exchange between Ana, a clinic nurse, and Jessica, a hospital nurse. Ana comes out of the bathroom, turns to her left, and starts walking down Corridor B (I1). As she is crossing Corridor A, Ana addresses a "*Ça va?*" check to Jessica, who is carefully inspecting the contents of the reanimation trolley in the urgent care room corridor (line 2, I2). Jessica responds without discontinuing her inspection (line 3). Ana passes by her colleague and then moves away into the urgent care room (I4). There is no talk between the interlocutors before the first turn-at-talk reproduced in line 2.

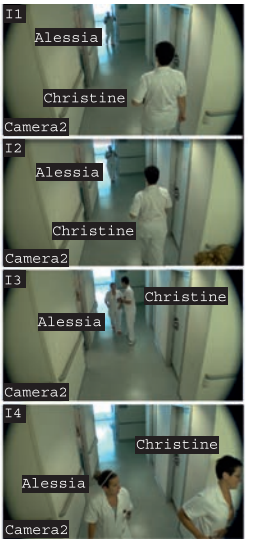
Excerpt 3: 1233_25B_045051

1		[I1](2.7)
2	Ana:	[I2]ça ↑va?
		going okay
3	Jes:	[I3]°mhmh°
		mhmh
4		(4.6)[I4]

Prior to Excerpt 4, Alessia – a clinic nurse – had unsuccessfully tried to make a call to someone who calls her back a few minutes later. Christine – also a clinic nurse – took the call and went to the day hospital to hand the cellphone to Alessia, and then left. As she concludes the call, Alessia comes out of the day hospital and starts walking toward Christine, who is about to enter Corridor B (I1). As in Excerpt 3, there is no talk between the speakers before the first turn-at-talk in line 2, when Christine addresses a "*Ça va?*" check to Alessia. Alessia responds (line 4), and then Christine introduces an expansion of the check sequence (lines 5–6) as both co-workers merge and Christine recovers the cellphone. In line 7, Alessia conveys that she happened to call the person just when he or she was away for a minute; the person called back immediately but Alessia was already away from the phone; for this reason, we translate "*on s'est croisés*" as "we just missed each other." As Alessia is about to start this response, Christine readies to make a U-turn (I3). Next, the two nurses walk down corridor B side-by-side, and Christine then moves away as she turns left into Corridor A (I4).

Excerpt 4: 327_21A_032317

1		[I1](0.5)
2	Chi:	[I2]ça ↑va?
		going okay
3		(1.0)
4	Ale:	mais: oui: (°mais c-°)
		oh yes but it
5	Chi:	<vous avez réussi à vous
		have you managed
6		↑join:dre?=
		to get through to each other
7	Ale:	=[I3]mais ↑oui:: (0.4) on s'est croisés
		oh yes we just missed each other
8		(1.2)[I4]



Like in Excerpts 3 and 4, the "*Ça va?*" check questions examined in this article neither follow greetings nor substitute for them. Accordingly, they have the distinct feature of not being reciprocated on a routine basis, without this constituting a noticeable absence. A asks B "*Ça va?*," B responds and does not return the question to A. The post-greeting "*Ça va?*" questions examined in the previous Section 4.1 are a-situational in the sense that they are delivered without the need for a particular reason for interest or concern about the recipient's personal state; they follow greetings in a routine way. In contrast, a distinct feature of the "*Ça va?*" checks examined in this Section 4.2 is that they are oriented to the specific situation in which the recipient is involved (more than to his or her general personal state) – a difference conveyed by the English translation. The features of the situation provide for the relevance of the check. Thus, in Excerpt 3, Anna is probably orienting to the fact that Jessica is carefully inspecting the contents of the reanimation trolley, which may be indicative, for instance, of some type of difficulty related to them. In Excerpt 4, Christine orients to the fact that Alessia and the caller have had some difficulties in getting in touch; this is clearly displayed by the design of her question in lines 5 to 6: "Have you managed to get through to each other?." It is because "*Ça va?*" checks are recipient-situation-specific that they are not reciprocated – unless of course the recipient of a check finds sufficient grounds for producing, in his or her own turn, a new check oriented to the situation of the producer of the first one. The checks are designed as inquiries to verify that the

situation in which the recipient is involved conforms to a routine state of affairs. As polar questions, they require a "yes" or "no" answer that confirms or rejects the assertion that they imply (namely, that "things are going okay"). In our data, the affirmative repetition "*Ça va*," which is the most common response to post-greeting "*Ça va?*" utterances, is not a common response to "*Ça va?*" checks. The latter in fact receive a variety of responses including "yes" and "no" tokens, acquiescing nods and particles like "mhmh" and/or brief trouble-reports. As previously stated, the "*Ça va?*" checks are oriented to some type of singularity in the recipient's situation – for instance, a nurse carefully inspecting the contents of the reanimation trolley (Excerpt 3) or being sought by a caller (Excerpt 4). The expression in itself nevertheless reveals nothing about the specific observed situational feature that gives rise to its uttering; this discretion and lack of specificity may well account for its recurrent use. These checks may resemble real questions intended to obtain real answers: the recipient of a "*Ça va?*" check produces a "no problem" response or, alternatively, displays some sort of trouble. Nevertheless, the inquiry may be tempered by the question's formulaic and general nature, which projects a short response with similar characteristics, such as a mere "Yes" without further elaboration. Like in the case of post-greetings "*Ça va?*," responses to "*Ça va?*" checks comply with a general preference for agreement (Sacks 1987), expressed by a type-conforming "yes" response (Raymond 2003). This is the case even when a trouble-report follows. Much like the "understanding-checks" in classroom interactions (Waring 2012), these "normality-checks" among colleagues could thus be oriented to a "principle of optimization" (Heritage 2010). They orient to the existence of a potential "problem" but project a response corresponding to a situation that is "under control." As examined in the next section, this is particularly the case when they are uttered during fleeting passing-by encounters in which they verbally open an exchange that body orientations have already marked as about to be closed. To treat a "problem" response as a real possibility, the speaker must show readiness to engage in more sustained body and verbal interaction, for instance by stopping or reversing course to attend to the recipient's problem. In this case, the "*Ça va?*" check can function as a preliminary to an offer of help or actual provision of it, these actions being contingent on the response to the check (Schegloff 2007).

5 Passing by and performing "*Ça va?*" checks

In this section, we examine "*Ça va?*" checks that are performed in a very specific interactional configuration: while participants walk in close and parallel

trajectories going in opposite directions. In the accomplishment of these checks, issues of organization of the conversational activity are conflated with those of the walking in a passing-by configuration. To highlight some basic features of the latter, we will first analyze a passing-by in which the participants do not talk to each other (Excerpt 5). We will then turn to three instances of passing-by combined with a "*Ça va?*" check activity. In the first one, the check receives a "non-problem" bodily response: an affirmative head nod (Excerpt 6). In the second, the recipient produces a minimally positive verbal response: "*ouais*" (yeah) (Excerpt 7). In the third, the check receives a "problem" response and the check initiator reverses her trajectory to assist her colleague (Excerpt 8). The analysis details the interactional organization of the checks as pertaining to the concerted accomplishment of the actuality of a "problem," or its absence, in the co-worker's situation.

In this section, we strive to present the participants' multimodal conduct in a precise yet legible way. We pay attention to an array of semiotic resources – gaze, facial expressions, body orientations, walking trajectories, pointing gestures, and objet manipulation – together with talk. Transcripts systematically representing, in parallel lines, the temporal deployment of each of these resources, throughout the excerpts and by both participants, make it possible to indicate in very precise terms how they evolve and interrelate. Unfortunately, they proved to be impractical in terms of legibility and typesetting. We thus opted for an alternative consisting of providing detailed descriptions combined with conversational transcript for the talk, and numerous complex visuals drawn from the multi-cam video clips of the excerpts. The video clips start as soon as the first participant can be seen on screen and ends when both are no longer visible. The pictures correspond to the angles of Cameras 2 and 4, which are placed at opposite ends of Corridor B (see Figure 1). At the top of the images, we insert a time code that indicates the point in time with respect to the clip's entire duration in hours, minutes, seconds, and frame number (between 1 and 24 frames/s). In the text, we refer only to the second and frame number of the time code. When necessary, we supplement the multi-cam pictures with close-up images of participants' faces as well as lines and circles to highlight specific phenomena. When the excerpt includes talk, we transcribe it using Jefferson's (2004) conventions. In the transcript, the time codes correspond to the video clip image of the beginning of the event (whether talk, silence, or bodily behavior) indicated first in the transcript line. We include in the transcripts only one description of bodily conduct: Lisa's nod in Excerpt 6, which we consider as the response to the "*Ça va?*" check.

5.1 Passing by without talk

In Excerpt 5, Alessia, a clinic nurse, exits the day hospital and makes her way to the urgent care room. She passes by Jessica, a hospital nurse, who, having left the urgent care room, is now herself heading in the direction of the day hospital. It is mid-afternoon and the two colleagues have been working together since the morning, and thus have already encountered each other several times.

At the beginning of the excerpt (00:00), Alessia comes out of the day hospital looking downward. A little after that (00:18), Jessica appears at the end of the urgent care room corridor and turns in the direction of the exit. As she looks in front of her, she can see Alessia, who is now crossing Corridor C, her face and gaze turned to her left toward the clinic's main entrance (Figure 2, 01:04).

Excerpt 5: 404_21B_021658

Figure 2: Excerpt 5, 01:04.

Jessica keeps her body demeanour constant, moving forward with a blank facial expression. This provides a continuous space of opportunity for Alessia (who can start looking at her at any point) to infer her immediate actions from her appeareance (Sudnow 1972). Jessica's determined forward motion suggests that she will continue walking in a similar way. Two steps further, Alessia and Jessica are walking directly toward each other (01:23). They move forward in the corridor space between the entrance of the day hospital and the end of the corridor of the urgent care room. They walk parallel to the walls of this space, which constitutes an "oriented object" (Garfinkel 2002) with specific directional properties, projecting a course of movement (Laurier et al. 2010). As Alessia enters Corridor B, she starts reorienting her face in front of her, and then raises her gaze. While she does this, her gaze meets Jessica's for the first time (Figure 3, 2:18).

As soon as this eye contact occurs, Alessia adopts a smiling expression that she partially alters by rapidly pressing her lips closed (03:06). Jessica maintains a

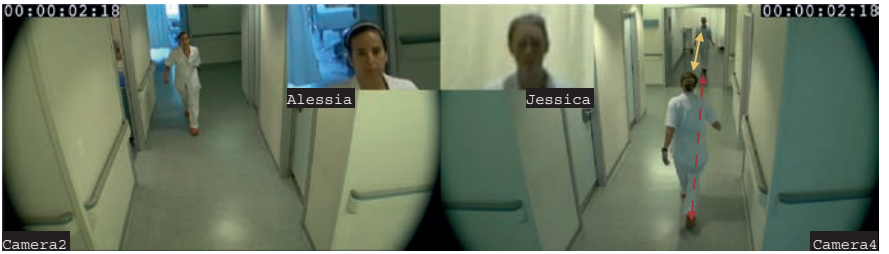


Figure 3: Excerpt 5, 02:18.

blank expression and clearly shifts from the center of the corridor to her right (03:11). She thus partitions the corridor space into two parallel lanes (cf. Goffman 1971; Collett and Marsh 1981 and Relieu 1996 on lane formation). With this shift, she makes room for Alessia and herself to pass by each other and displays that she is not in a trajectory leading to a convergent position. As Alessia keeps walking on her own right side of the corridor, both participants now form close, parallel trajectories going in opposite directions (Figure 4, 03:16).

Figure 4: Excerpt 5, 03:16.

Moreover, Alessia and Jessica are moving with a rapid, regular gait that displays that they are heading somewhere (Ryave and Schenkein 1974); it is an "away-oriented walk." The corridor is thus configured not as a gathering place but as a passageway leading to an intended destination (Broth and Lundström 2013). Moreover, they configure the space going from the day hospital to the urgent care room as a territory of undifferentiated rights (Scheflen 1976) through which staff, unlike patients, can move without halting and negotiating access at each threshold.

Gaze and facial expressions also contribute to the production and display of close but non-convergent trajectories. Participants display that even though they

are moving nearer each other, they are not going to engage in any sustained common activity. Their approach is thus minimally engaging. As she moves forward, Alessia shows a controlled smile, lips pressed closed. Starting at 03:18, Jessica is also smiling but only slightly. A shift in gaze orientation is added to this to show that the participants are not inviting each other to engage interactionally any further. Indeed, when they are at a distance of approximately 2.5 meters, first Jessica (03:23), then Alessia (Figure 5, 4:02) turn their gaze downward, their eyes almost closed. This is reminiscent of Goffman's (1966 [1963]) observation on pedestrians' "dimming of lights" as they come closer prior to passing by each other.

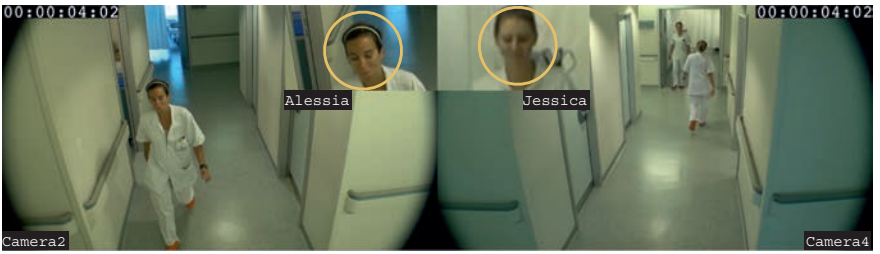


Figure 5: Excerpt 5, 04:02.

Alessia keeps her face and gaze downward for the rest of the passing-by. Jessica briefly lifts her eyes and looks at Alessia, between 04:11 and 04:17, and then lowers them again as she passes by her. At this point, the participants are not only avoiding looking at each other – in terms of body behavior, they are accomplishing a close but clean passing-by excluding any type of body contact, without the need to angle the body or step aside (Figure 6, 04:18). They manage to keep swinging their arms without incurring body contact by only slightly increasing their mutual distance, keeping it to about 30 cm, still amiable

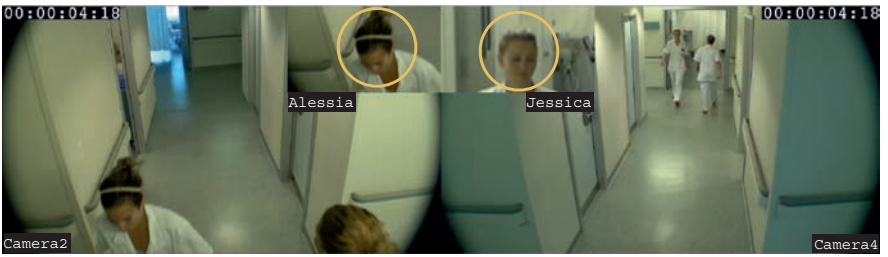


Figure 6: Excerpt 5, 04:18.

(Scheflen 1976), in a spot allowing them to separate yet further (see Wolff 1973 on avoiding collision in a close-range passing-by).

The participants pass by each other and shift apart, continuing on in opposite directions. Alessia keeps walking in the direction of the urgent care room, still occupying the lane of the corridor to her right. Jessica slowly shifts her trajectory to the center of the corridor (Figure 7, 06:10); this echoes Goffman's (1971) and Wolff's (1973) observations on pedestrians reverting to the original line of walk after a passing-by. None of the participants produce any talk, either before, during, or after the passing-by.

Figure 7: Excerpt 5, 06:10.

Mondada (2002) shows that pedestrians' degree of mutual accessibility may increase when one of them has an appearance diverging from normal. Macbeth (1999) however argues that even in such a case, participants may achieve mutual disattention. Excerpt 5 is an example of a routine, nothing-to-be concerned-about, nothing-to-report passing-by interaction. It evidences some basic features of such interactions: close but not convergent trajectories and limited interactional involvement that preserves "away-oriented walking" as the main and dominant activity. When achieving such an interactional configuration, participants rely on resources like neutral facial expressions, gaze aversion, limited smiling, unrelenting forward gait and corridor partitioning. The reflexive deployment of these resources embodies a common understanding of the type of interaction in progress. We will now look at how these features play out in some excerpts of "*Ça va?*" checks performed in a passing-by configuration.

5.2 Passing-by "*Ça va*?" check responded to only bodily

In Excerpt 6, Lisa, a hospital nursing assistant, is coming out of the urgent care room. She seems to be looking for someone or something as she briefly halts at

the juncture of corridors A and B, looking in the direction of the plaster room. Jessica, who has turned into Corridor B from Corridor C, asks her "*ça va?*" (07:17). Lisa responds positively with a head nod – to be precise, just with the initial move of a nod consisting of lowering the head (08:00) – and the two colleagues pass by each other.

Excerpt 6: 1113_25A_032104

00:00		(3.9)[F8] (1.4)[F9] (0.5)[F10] (0.8)[F11] (0.8)
07:17	Jes:	ça[F12] va?
		going okay
08:00	Lis:	(0.1, lowers head)[F13]
08:04		(0.5)[F14] (7.6)

At 03:24 (Figure 8), Jessica is looking in front of her as she walks down Corridor C and approaches the day hospital door. As she exits the urgent care room, Lisa is looking in front of her, and thus sees Jessica.

Figure 8: Excerpt 6, 03:24.

Jessica then reaches the day hospital door, peers inside, and then starts turning in the direction of the urgent care room (04:21). As she turns, she sees Lisa and their gazes cross (Figure 9, 05:10).

Jessica starts walking in the direction of the urgent care room, looking at the approaching Lisa, who also keeps looking at her. Meanwhile, both participants maintain rather blank facial expressions (Figure 10, 05:24).

As Lisa is about to finish crossing Corridor A and engage in Corridor B, she orients her body to her left, halts very briefly at the juncture of the two corridors and ostensibly stares at the end of the corridor as though looking for or at something (06:07 to 06:20). At the moment that a clinic staff member engages in crossing a corridor, it is fairly common that he or she very briefly looks to one or both sides as a way of checking what may be happening in that direction. Lisa's

Figure 9: Excerpt 6, 05:10.

Figure 10: Excerpt 6, 05:24.

behavior here is rather odd in the sense that she orients to her left in a very pronounced way, in the absence of any aural or visual phenomenon that could have attracted her attention. Moreover, she does it somewhat late, when she already has a foot in Corridor B and Jessica is approaching her. These moves are attentively observed by Jessica, who starts turning her face toward Lisa and adopts a crooked smile, which may already embody an understanding of the moves being rather peculiar (Figure 11, 06:20).

When Lisa resumes walking, she does not re-orient frontally but rather orients in a slightly oblique line to her right for a full-body frontal position

Figure 11: Excerpt 6, 06:20.

with respect to Jessica (07:12). It looks like Lisa has avoided a frontal, sustained approaching walk toward Jessica by halting and turning to her left to face Jessica only when two steps away, a distance at which the extent of interactional involvement during the passing-by is crucially defined (Goffman 1966 [1963]). Lisa smiles at her and Jessica utters a "*ça va*?" check produced with a smile on her face (Figure 12, 07:20). Lisa responds with a gesture consisting of lowering her head, the initial move of a head nod, which serves as a positive answer (Figure 13, 08:03).

At the time of Jessica's head move, both participants have their eyes shut. Jessica then opens her eyes and sees Lisa shifting her head laterally, her eyes still shut, from the down position to her left, to the door of the stock room (08:06 to 08:08). With this move, Lisa again avoids frontal eye contact with Jessica. At

Figure 12: Excerpt 6, 07:20.

Figure 13: Excerpt 6, 08:03.

the very same moment that Lisa opens her eyes, her gaze already oriented to the stock room, Jessica is diverting her own gaze away from Lisa's face (08:09). She starts looking over her colleague's head. It is in this disengaged interactional configuration that they pass by each other (Figure 14, 08:18).

Figure 14: Excerpt 6, 08:18.

As soon as the passing-by is accomplished, Lisa reorients her face and gaze in front of her (09:03). Both participants keep walking forward, without further talk, until Jessica reaches the urgent care room (11:23) and Lisa the day hospital (13:22).

At the time of Excerpt 6, Jessica and Lisa have been working in the clinic for several hours, have already talked with each other many times and are thus well past the greetings of the beginning of a workday. In Excerpt 6, they happen upon each other once again and have another brief, contingent encounter in the corridor. The "*ça va?*" question neither follows greetings nor substitutes for them. It is an expression of solicitude that seeks to verify that everything is normal. It is grounded in the immediate specific situation in which the recipient is involved. Its precise location in time points to what provides its relevance. The check is oriented to the fact that Lisa seems to be staring at the end of the corridor A, maybe somewhat artificially. Formulaic and general in scope, the check does not specify what seems to be peculiar and thus avoids appearing overtly inquisitive (Jessica is not asking for instance: "What are you looking at?"). The non-problem response confirms that things are going okay, which was implied in the question. By providing only a very discreet bodily response, Lisa could almost be seen as minimizing the significance of her moves and, retrospectively, the relevance of the check. In any case, her response is not a value description of a situation or a personal state. Being recipient-situation-specific, the "*ça va?*" question is not reciprocated.

In the previous Section 5.1, we argued that producing a passing-by implies preserving "away-oriented walking" as the main and dominant involvement. In

Excerpt 6, the participants minimize mutual interactional involvement as they move closer to each other and produce the check. After making eye contact, they both maintain blank expressions, from which all signs of recognition or invitation are absent. Then, they interrupt eye contact because Lisa orients her attention away from Jessica when she turns toward Corridor A. As Lisa stares away, Jessica starts turning her head slightly to her as if preparing to engage in verbal interaction. Nevertheless, the rest of her body remains oriented forward, in a body torque (Schegloff 1998) that, combined with unrelenting gait, displays that possible talk would only be minimal (see Goffman 1971 on postural disjunctions when engaging in a conversational encounter with a body in motion). At a short distance from the passing-by, interactional face-to-face contact is reestablished, but only minimally. Lisa smiles at Jessica, who smiles back while producing the "*ça va?*" question. Lisa responds with just a nod and the response is not accompanied by any mutual gaze as both participants have their eyes shut at the time. When they open them again, it is to turn their gaze away from each other at the very moment of the passing-by. All in all, the participants shape the check activity as oriented to a peculiar aspect of Lisa's situation – the fact that she may look somehow at a loss, stopped in the middle of the way, staring at the end of the corridor – but also display a common understanding that the issue does not call for further talk or joint action.

5.3 Passing-by "*Ça va*?" check responded to verbally

In Excerpt 7, Lisa comes out of the day hospital pushing an ECG trolley and goes down Corridor B in the direction of the urgent care room. Carina, a clinic aide, who is exiting the urgent care room, asks her "*ça va?*" (07:08). Lisa produces a minimally positive response "*ouais*" (yeah, 07:18) as they pass by each other.

Excerpt 7: 602_22B_001639

00:00		(5.5)[F15] (0.5)[F16] (1.0)[F17] (.)[F18a] (.)
07:08	Car:	ça va?[F18b]
		going okay
07:18	Lis:	↓ouais:[F18c]
		yeah
08:02		(0.4)[F19a] (0.1)[F19b] (0.1)[F19c] (7.9)

At the beginning of the excerpt (00:00), Lisa is exiting the day hospital, pushing the trolley ahead of her, one hand on either side of the handle. But after three steps, she starts shifting to her right, pushing the trolley with one hand on

the handle, and steering it from the side with her other hand (03:24). As she moves forward at a rather rapid pace, she maintains her gaze downward, concentrating on keeping the machine straight. Carina sees Lisa involved in this situation when she turns to enter the urgent care room corridor (Figure 15, 05:12).

Figure 15: Excerpt 7, 05:12.

As it moves forward, the trolley tends to shift sideways across the corridor. Lisa's steering difficulties are observed by Carina, who keeps looking at her. At 6:01 (Figure 16), Lisa raises her gaze and sees Carina looking at her, coming in her direction.

Figure 16: Excerpt 7, 06:01.

Following the eye contact, both participants at first maintain blank facial expressions, but they partition the corridor space into two separate, parallel lanes. Carina starts moving from the center of the corridor to her left (06:20). At 7:03 (Figure 17), Lisa, at Carina's invitation at 07:00, starts smiling at her.

From 7:08 to 7:15, Carina asks Lisa "*ça va?*" as she keeps smiling and looking at her, and keeps shifting to the side, thus making room well in advance for Lisa to pass by. Just before Carina's turn, Lisa is still smiling and looking

Figure 17: Excerpt 7, 07:03.

Figure 18: (a), (b), (c): Excerpt 7, 07:06, 07:15, and 08:01.

back at her (Figure 18(a), 07:06 Camera 2). She then goes out of Camera 2's range but from the back it looks like Lisa turns her head toward the trolley during Carina's check (Figure 18(b), 07:15 Camera 4). From 7:18 to 8:01, Lisa answers "*ouais*" ("yeah"). Her head is by then clearly oriented to the machine while Carina keeps looking at her (Figure 18(c), 08:01 Camera 4).

Both colleagues are just one step away from crossing past each other. During the actual passing-by, Lisa involves herself in an activity that distances her from potential further interaction with Carina. She lifts a cable that is draped over the machine (Figures 19(a), 08:11 and 19(b), 08:15) but apparently lets it fall down again where it was, just after the passing-by (Figure 19(c), 08:20). Meanwhile, Carina reorients her face in front of her, thus away from Lisa.
After the passing-by, both colleagues shift apart without further exchange. Lisa continues to the end of the urgent care room corridor and then turns to enter the urgent care room while Carina proceeds, through Corridor B, to the stock room (09:07 to 13:06).

In Excerpt 7, starting at 7:00, when she is two steps away from Lisa, Carina produces an open smile addressed to her. Lisa reciprocates at 7:03, and at 7:08 Carina delivers the "*ça va?*" check question (see Schegloff 2004 on smiling as

Figures 19: (a), (b), (c): Excerpt 7, 08:11, 08:15, and 08:20.

preliminaries to conversation). As in Excerpt 6, the question is a new spate of talk during the day's work and is not preceded by greetings. It is oriented to the slightly challenging situation in which Lisa is involved, struggling to keep the cart going straight. Carina shows concern but uses a general formulaic expression that tactfully avoids mentioning the observed difficulties. Her question projects an affirmative answer, a confirmation that things are still under control. In a deep tone of voice, Lisa produces a mitigated, slightly elongated positive verbal response ("*ouais*," yeah). The answer acknowledges some type of ongoing difficulties which still correspond to a manageable situation. Both question and answer are extremely brief, immediately understandable without the need for elaboration, and do not project further talk. The recipient-situation-specific "*ça va?*" is not reciprocated and the verbal exchange is limited to a single adjacency pair sequence. The exchange is thus adjusted to the temporality of a passing-by, with talk corresponding to the fleeting availability of the interlocutors (see Hirschauer 2005 on a similar feature of talk in elevators).

Before the actual passing-by, as Carina starts uttering the check in 07:08, she adopts a body torque, a behavior also observed in Jessica in Excerpt 6. She keeps her body frontally oriented except for her face, which is turned slightly to her right and oriented to the approaching colleague. The face position corresponds to the engagement in interacting with the colleague while the position of the rest of the body corresponds to the engagement in the activity of away-oriented walk. This postural configuration functions as an "extra-sequence organization source" providing for talk minimization, curtailing its extendability (Schegloff 1998). On her side, Lisa avoids engaging in face-to-face talk with Carina when, instead of turning her face toward her, she responds to the check while orienting her attention to the machine, which could be seen as an "involvement shield" (Goffman 1966 [1963]). On the one hand, the behavior of both Carina – who makes room for Lisa to pass by with the machine – and of Lisa – who turns her head toward the machine, then handles the cable – embodies a common understanding that the handling of the machine is a

problematic situational aspect accounting for the check. On the other, the fact that both participants continue walking in opposite directions, and especially that Lisa restrains her interactional involvement with Carina, also embodies the understanding that the issue does not require further talk or joint action.

To summarize, Excerpt 7 exemplifies some of the basic features of passing-by interactions combined with the production of a "*Ça va?*" check. The participants rely on resources like unrelenting gait and corridor partitioning to preserve "away-oriented walking" as their main and dominant activity. Their trajectories are close but avoid convergence and physical contact. Even if participants smile at each other prior to the "*Ça va?*" check and talk to each other, they produce just a quick verbal exchange and avoid engaging in any more sustained common activity.

5.4 Passing-by "*Ça va?*" check with a U-turn

At the time of Excerpt 8, most of the nurses had left for lunch. Christine, a clinic nurse, has stayed in charge of the clinic in her capacity as triage nurse and Jessica, a hospital nurse occasionally working in the clinic, is the only nurse in the urgent care room. In the excerpt, Christine walks toward the urgent care room, sees Jessica coming out of it and addresses a "*Ça va?*" check question to her. In contrast to the previous two excerpts, here the recipient of the check produces a "problem" response: Jessica is looking for a splint. Christine, who has in the meantime reached Jessica's side, turns around, reverses her trajectory, and accompanies Jessica to the stock room where the splint she is searching for is to be found.

Excerpt 8: 315_21A_044724

00:00		(1.2)[F20] (0.7)
02:01	Chi:	[F21]ça va pour[F22] toi?
		going okay for you
02:22	Jes:	°oui:°, [F23]°j'vais prendre une p'tite attelle[F24] euh:
		yes I am going to take a small splint um
04:22		(0.4) coque là.=>t'sais [où c'est?<][F25]
		a shell thing you know where it is
05:21	Chi:	[(de) s]tack
		of stack
06:09		(0.3)
06:17	Jes:	°↓ouais°
		yeah
06:23		(1.2)

When Christine turns to enter Corridor B, she is looking at her watch (00:14). Jessica looks in her direction as soon as she turns to enter the corridor of the urgent care room (00:18). At 01:06 (Figure 20), Christine lifts her face and looks in the direction of Jessica, who has kept looking at her. They establish eye contact for the first time.

Figure 20: Excerpt 8, 01:06.

Both nurses keep walking forward fairly rapidly and Christine starts shifting to her right, thus partitioning the corridor into two lanes (01:14). Jessica has an impassive facial expression, which Christine observes with an expression of gradually mounting concern as she approaches. Indeed, Christine fixes her gaze on Jessica, gradually opening her eyes wider, and opens her mouth, as if startled by something, and starts raising her left hand in a pointing gesture oriented to her colleague (01:21). At 2:01 (Figure 21), Christine utters "*ça va pour toi*?" (going okay for you?).

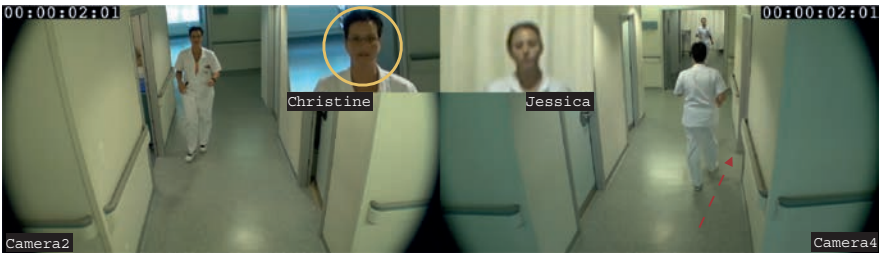


Figure 21: Excerpt 8, 02:01.

During the check, Christine increases her display of concern, looking intently at Jessica, to whom she is by now patently pointing with her right hand (Figure 22, 2:11).

Figure 22: Excerpt 8, 02:11.

Figure 23: Excerpt 8, 03:07.

Still under Christine's watchful gaze, Jessica timidly responds "*oui*" (yes, 2:22). Her tone of voice is very soft, the "yes" token is slightly elongated and uttered with a continuing intonation projecting more to come. From this point it becomes clear that Christine is shifting to her left, cutting across Jessica's projected trajectory (Figure 23, 03:07).

Jessica keeps moving forward but starts shifting her trajectory to her left, crossing to the left side of the corridor and thus avoiding moving toward Christine (03:17). Continuing to look away from her colleague, Jessica adds that she is going to get a small splint (03:07 to 04:10). Meanwhile, Christine, who has kept moving in Jessica's direction, looking at her fixedly, has crossed the corridor completely, walking to her left, and is now a hand's distance away from Jessica (Figure 24, 04:10).

Jessica searches for the name of the splint ("um a shell thing," 04:11 to 05:19) and makes a hand gesture displaying how it fits on the finger. She talks to her colleague in a soft voice, without looking at her, while continuing to walk rather briskly, appearing almost reluctant to engage with her. Nevertheless, starting at 04:14, with Jessica's "um," Christine makes a U-turn to walk with Jessica to the stock room. On their way, she gives Jessica the technical name of the splint ("*stack*"), while Jessica asks her where to find it (Figure 25, 06:03).

Figure 24: Excerpt 8, 04:10.

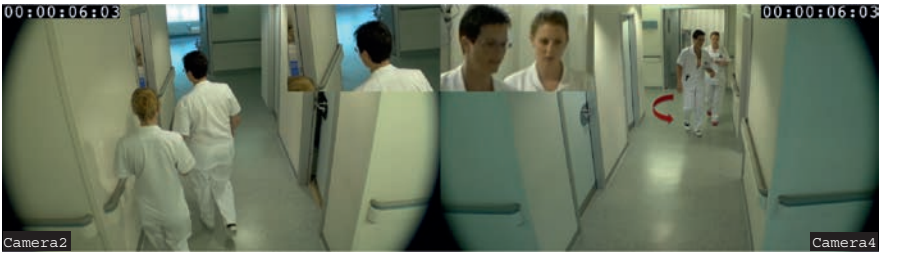


Figure 25: Excerpt 8, 06:03.

In Excerpt 8, Jessica is not involved in an observable problematic situation, in contrast for instance with Lisa's struggle with the trolley in Excerpt 7. The relevance of the check is grounded in the fact that Jessica has been left alone in the urgent care room and Christine is in charge of the clinic while all the other nurses are away. Christine heads to the urgent care room and sees Jessica leaving it, remaining impassive upon seeing her. Christine shows marked concern and utters the check right away although they are still far away from each other. The check projects an offer of help (by Christine) or a request for it (by Jessica) as highly possible next moves following the response to the check. The display of concern contrasts with the smiling expressions that precede and accompany the checks in Excerpts 6 and 7. In those cases, the smiles correspond to a peculiar but benign state of affairs, the check question is produced at middle to close distance and receives a response according to a no-problem or at least manageable situation. In this excerpt, Christine is still far away from Jessica when she addresses the check question to her, which contributes to the display of a forceful concern but also provides time to produce and obtain an elaborated response, and to deal with it during the approach. All in all, Christine's conduct embodies an understanding that her colleague's situation

may require further talk and joint action than just an in-passing check, thus contrasting with Carina's and Jessica's conduct in Excerpts 6 and 7, respectively.

Like in previous excerpts, the "*ça va?*" question in Excerpt 8 initiates a new spate of talk between two staff members that come across each other in the corridors. It does not follow greetings or substitute for them and it is not reciprocated. In this excerpt, in contrast to the previous ones, the question specifies the object being checked. The question is not an overall "Everything going okay?." The object of the check is neither Jessica herself – the question is not "are you doing okay?" – but Jessica in relation to a situation pertaining to her – the question is "[Are things] going okay for you?." Here, the adding of this item may be related to the absence of an immediate observable trouble that could account for the check and constitute its self-evident implicit referent. Moreover, the design of the check highlights that Jessica is involved in a situation (the way things are going in the urgent care room) that may have many aspects (a situation thus far more complex than Lisa's struggle with the trolley), and that Christine is particularly concerned with one aspect of it: how it is going for Jessica. Jessica first gives a positive response but the prosodic features of her "yes" token make it plain that she has more to say. Mirroring the object-specifying item of the check question, Jessica elaborates on her response, talking of herself and not of the situation in general. She presents what she is about to do (take a small splint), thus providing an explanation of her exiting the urgent care room. This response component does not report a problem. That Jessica may have some type of difficulties arises next, when she struggles to provide the name of the specific splint she is in need of ("um a shell thing"). It is during the production of this part of Jessica's response that Christine reverses course. Thus, Christine is already engaged in walking with Jessica toward the stock room when Jessica requests her help to find the right splint ("do you know where it is?"). Meanwhile, Christine provides the technical name of the medical device ("of stack") that Jessica later acknowledges ("yeah"). At this point, through their talk and bodily conduct, Jessica and Christine are displaying a common understanding of the relevance of the check, the actuality of a "problem" in Jessica's situation, and the need for further talk and common action oriented to addressing it.

This excerpt contrasts with both the "non-converging away-oriented walk" and the "limited interactional involvement" at work in Excerpts 5, 6, and 7. Here, Christine focuses fixedly on Jessica, conspicuously expresses concern (worried facial expression) specifically addressed to her (pointing gesture and object-specific check), and progressively shifts her trajectory to converge with Jessica's. Christine is not contributing to a "non-problem" response that could be produced and acknowledged without any need for the participants to stop or alter their walking. In contrast to Excerpts 6 and 7, the initiator of the check here

is paving the way at least for an extended response, even for one showing the opportuneness of the check. In fact, the check functions as a preliminary to a provision of help contingent on the response to it. As for Jessica, she is not particularly interactionally engaging toward Christine in terms of facial expression and body behavior. She keeps walking and looking straight ahead. The key element is that she pursues her response after the initial "yes" and tells Christine what she is doing. At this point, Christine's crossing in front of Jessica's trajectory dispels any possible projection of her just passing by. By moving to Jessica's side, she sustains Jessica's elaboration of her answer in a way that provides an opportunity for Christine to deal with the situation. Ultimately, Jessica voices some type of difficulty and a request for assistance. Away-oriented walking ceases to be the main and dominant involvement of the two participants, who engage in a new joint activity: looking for the splint in the stock room.Even more clearly than the previous ones, Excerpt 8 evidences that the actuality of a "problem" is an interactional product that results from a possible initial display of trouble but even more so from the issuing of a related check, its specifics, and the response to it. Had Christine not so forcefully projected a problem-response, Jessica may never have produced it.

6 Conclusion

Our study approaches some of the most basic normative aspects of human interaction: namely, that individuals acknowledge in one way or another the fact that they are co-present, orient to each other for action coordination, and deal with the fact that mutual proximity may project a face-to-face encounter (Licoppe 2009). More specifically, we examine interactional phenomena related to moving from unfocused to focused interactions and establishing a joint transactional space. Initially identified by Goffman's (1966 [1963]) and Kendon's (1976) classic studies, these phenomena have recently been revisited by multimodal and conversation analytic research (Mondada 2009; Mortensen and Hazel 2014). The originality of our own work is the examination of situations that do not lead to a static encounter with participants adopting frontal or side-by-side positions for an extended verbal exchange. Joining the "spatial and mobility turn" in language and social interaction research (Mcllvenny et al. 2009), we in fact examine encounters produced while on the move, in hospital corridors. We look at a specific form of "in-passing" interaction between clinical staff: "passing-by" as participants follow close and parallel trajectories going in opposite directions. And we focus on a specific conversational activity achieved in this interactional configuration: "goingokay" checks introduced by the French

interrogative expression "*Ça va?*." We analyze these checks formally as well as functionally, combining detailed descriptions of their multimodal organization with specifications of the work they achieve.

During the workday, staff members sustain a continuing state of incipient talk (Schegloff 2007), dispensing with greetings and farewells in each new exchange. The examined "*Ça va?*" checks initiate and sometimes constitute the only conversational activity of a new spate of talk during a workday. They neither follow greetings nor substitute for them. Through the check, one staff member verifies that the situation of a colleague, the recipient of the check, is conforming to a routine state of affairs. Being recipient-situation-specific, the "*Ça va?*" question is not reciprocated, without this constituting a remarkable absence. When producing these checks in a passing-by interactional configuration, participants build close but not convergent trajectories and limit interactional involvement to preserve "away-oriented walking" as the main and dominant activity. They rely on resources such as neutral facial expressions, gaze aversion, unrelenting forward gait and corridor partitioning. These resources are at work during checks receiving positive responses in which participants produce minimal talk articulated with fast forward walking to create a fleeting interaction. When the check receives a "problem" response, the interactional configuration may be altered to increase interactional involvement. The check functions as a preliminary to the provision of help. The initiator displays marked concern, reverses her trajectory and engages in additional talk and joint activity with the recipient. In any case, the actuality of a "problem" in the co-worker's situation emerges as an interactional construct from the actions of both participants, who project, display, and potentially confirm, that there is indeed something to be concerned about.

At the substantive level, the article contributes to the study of well-known basic interactional phenomena – handling co-presence and establishing transactional spaces – as well as rather under-studied specific ones: "*Ça va?*" checks and passing-by interactions between co-workers in a semi-public interior space. The article shows that the pragmatic meaning of the commonplace French expression "*Ca va?*" varies depending on the evolving and contingent multimodal features of the course of action in which it starts, as may the meanings of linguistic expressions in general (Selting and Couper-Kuhlen 2001). It also shows the importance of studying even the briefest and most routine forms of communication, and the minute details of their *in situ* sequential organization through a combination of talk and bodily behavior, as they may consist of organizational conduct particularly adapted to a specific workplace setting (Hindmarsh and Pilnick 2002).

At the methodological level, the paper presents a recording set-up – composed of several suspended fixed cameras and wireless microphones recording

simultaneously and uninterruptedly – that constitutes an original addition to techniques previously employed to capture practices that are particularly sensitive to intrusion (Heath et al. 2010). Moreover, the collected data provides for close examination of a single scene from different camera angles, which is particularly advantageous for the analysis of multimodal interactional practices performed by participants on the move. Besides, switching from one microphone audio track to the next makes it possible to distinctly hear participants' talk as they move forward as well as to grasp to what extent the talk could be heard from different locations inside the clinic. We also innovate in the way we present the data – including conversational transcripts combined with complex visuals – in an attempt to provide a detailed yet easy-to-read rendition of participants' conduct.

Passing-by "*Ça va?*" checks are communicative arrangements well-suited to a close-knit team accomplishing closely interrelated activities in a distributed workspace (Backhouse and Drew 1992). They serve the purpose of displaying and attending to the state of things in a rapidly changing and time-critical work environment (Randell et al. 2010). While coming across each other in the clinic corridors, professionals orient to the possible singularity of a staff member's situation and quickly determine whether it conforms to a routine state of affairs. The checks may also function as practical team-maintaining devices entangled in the subtle "micro-politics" of social action (Drew 2011) in the workplace. On one hand, they "do" collegial solidarity, which requires showing concern for colleagues and readiness to help them in case of need. On the other, they are a routine instrument of professional control, inquiring as to the normality of situations pertaining to co-workers, who may or may not be soliciting such inquiries. Further research is needed to understand the directionality of the checks – initiated by individuals noting a potential trouble by the co-participant but perhaps also by more experienced or in-charge professionals in the direction of others who are less so -, how they are volunteered or invited, welcomed with relief or proudly resisted, pursued or perfunctorily executed. The detailed sequential organization of these on-the-fly checks may thus prove to be of import not only for the multimodal and conversational study of the basic features of mobile interactions but also for the understanding of how they contribute to work organization.

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Appendix: Transcription conventions

[ ]	overlapping talk
=	continuous talk
(.)	micro-pause
(0.2)	silence in tenths of a second. It indicates the duration of bodily behavior when followed by its description
.	final intonation
,	continuing intonation
?	rising intonation
:	prolongation of the preceding sound
speci-	cut-off
<u>you</u>	emphasis
°all right	talk starts markedly soft
°yes°	softer talk
↑	rise in pitch
↓	fall in pitch
thi(h)nk	plosive interpolated particle, possibly laughter
>yes<	talk is compressed
<because	hurried start
( )	unachievable, likely or alternative hearing

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