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Poster Abstract

Informal caregiver involvement in innovative home care projects in Belgium

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Abstract:

Introduction: Continuity of care is essential when trying to avoid untimely institutionalization of the frail elderly. Either continuously or occasionally, multiple care providers are involved in the integrated care for a community-dwelling frail older person. In this coming and going of care providers over time, the informal caregiver usually remains the constant factor.

In 2009 the Belgian Federal Government launched a call for innovative projects that aim at maintaining the community-dwelling frail elderly at home for as long as possible. That call resulted in 66 projects that offer a variety of innovative interventions.

Aims: The aim of this study is to describe to what extent these projects involve the informal caregivers in the organization of care for the frail elderly.

Methods: Data are collected through the projects initial application files, yearly questionnaires, interviews and focus groups. We performed a descriptive analysis of the data and compared subgroups of projects based on the type of interventions.

Results: First results show that in most projects involvement of the informal caregiver in the care process is not well established. A minority of projects describe how they plan to implement caregiver involvement in their application files. Caregiver involvement mainly occurs sporadically, when important decisions about an individual client have to be made.

Conclusion: The projects lack a structured approach to implement informal caregiver involvement in the care process of frail elderly.

Keywords

informal caregivers, involvement, home care
