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Conference Abstract

Best practices for frail older persons and their care professionals in the European home care setting: study protocol

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Abstract

Introduction: This project is framed within the IBenC project ('Identifying Best practices for care dependent elderly by Benchmarking Costs and outcomes of community care'), which is funded by the European 7th Framework Program. With the ageing of the European population, the number of frail and disabled older persons who need long-term care at home will increase. Providing high quality community care for older people remains an important challenge. In order to improve the quality of care, we need to obtain information about the causal relationships between the structural elements of the care setting, the care processes and client outcomes. Since care professionals are essential for good patient care it is also needed to profile the characteristics of the care professionals, such as job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is the key to worker retention. In long-term care the turnover rates are a serious concern and high turnover may lead to poor quality of care or to no care at all.

Aim: The overall aim of the study is to identify best practices for frail older people and their care professionals in the European community care setting. Therefore we formulated the following research questions: Which elements of community care for frail older persons across Europe, regarding health care policy (macro), community care organisations (meso) and care professionals (micro) have an impact on (1) quality of care and on (2) job satisfaction among care professionals? (3) How does job satisfaction correlate with quality of care?

Methods: The care outcomes will be measured longitudinally by means of the interRAI Home Care instrument (interRAI-HC), which will be filled out for 2750 frail older persons from community care organisations in Belgium, Germany, Finland, Iceland, Italy and the Netherlands. The interRAI-HC is an internationally validated, comprehensive geriatric assessment, used to collect data of clients in a structured and standardized way by different professionals. To collect data on macro, meso and micro level, managers and care professionals of participating community care organisations will fill out online questionnaires, including questions based on the framework of the Care Coordination Measure Mapping Atlas.

Conclusions and Discussion: The project will provide insight into (1) the best practices for frail older persons in the European community care setting by identifying elements that contribute to high quality care and high job satisfaction and (2) the correlation between job satisfaction and quality of care. In this way the results of this study can guide national and regional health care policy makers in Europe in their decision making process.

Lessons Learned: In order to improve the quality of care, we need to obtain information about the causal relationships between the structural elements of the care setting, the care processes and client outcomes.

Since care professionals are essential for good patient care it is also needed to profile the characteristics of the care professionals, such as job satisfaction.

In this way the results of this study can guide national and regional health care policy makers in Europe in their decision making process.

Keywords

frail elderly, quality of care, job satisfaction, research protocol

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