

Conference abstract

Applying operations management in client-oriented and cost-efficient provision of care, welfare and housing services

Carolien de Blok, PhD student, Department of TRANZO, Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences, Tilburg University

Bert Meijboom, Associate Professor Chain Care, Department of Organisation & Strategy, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Tilburg University

Katrien Luijkx, Department of TRANZO, Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences, Tilburg University

Jos Schols, Department of TRANZO, Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences, Tilburg University

Correspondence to: Bert Meijboom, E-mail: b.r.meijboom@uvt.nl

Abstract

Purpose: In all Western countries, ageing populations cause the demand for elderly care services to increase dramatically. In addition, elderly clients are getting more demanding about the services they require to fulfil their widely varying and multiple needs. Besides, cost reductions have been the focus of governmental policies and organisational practices for many years. Health care providers increasingly see operations management as a promising approach to align both client-orientation and cost-efficiency in their day-to-day practices.

Theory: The paper starts from operations management literature on front office—back office design and modular production. Organisations have several options for deciding which activities need to be performed by FO, BO, or the client himself, and in deciding which employees need to perform these activities. By applying modular production, organisations can differentiate care and related services to a high degree without major cost increases.

Method: A literature review will be presented leading to a theoretical framework. This formed the basis for explorative case studies in the elderly care sector.

Results and conclusions: It will be argued how insights provided with the framework may enhance a client-orientation in integrated care delivery without major cost increases. Although case studies need to be interpreted with caution, interesting implications for organisational structures and inter-organisational cooperation can be seen. We will discuss how combined supply of care services can be made transparent to enhance choice options in service products, and what is required at the level of professionals for providing care and service packages based on client demand.

Keywords

care for the elderly, operations management, literature study

Presentation slides available from:

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