

Conference abstract

Coding long-term care services—eDESDE-LTC

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Abstract

Introduction: Semantic variability is a barrier to effective networking of long-term care (LTC) services. The same name may be used for services providing different activities (i.e. day centres), and services with different names may have a similar pattern of care delivery. Furthermore, services are complex constructs which depend on local characteristics, vary over time and do not allow comparisons like with like. At present there is no standard coding system of LTC in Europe. This fact impedes cross-national comparisons, hampers European statistics on service availability, access and use, and slows down the development of international care planning strategies and patient mobility.

Description: The 'Description and Evaluation of Services and Directories in Europe' (DESDE) adapts to LTC the only currently available methodology for mapping, comparing and monitoring mental health and disability services (European Service Mapping Schedule—ESMS), which has already been applied in 16 countries in Europe. The system is based on descriptors called 'Main Types of Care' (MTC) including accessibility, information, self-help, outpatient and community care, day care and residential care. Services are arranged or organised in cluster combination of MTCs which emulate 'bar codes', identifying service characteristics according to MTCs. Thus, MTC availability and use can be compared across areas regardless of how services are named.

Conclusion: DESDE is a standard coding system of services for LTC which can be incorporated to electronic registers, databases and websites.

Keywords

long-term care, coding system, services

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