A new technology-driven concept of care. Insights from a Norwegian case-study

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“Think big – Start small – Scale fast” declares the Norwegian Government in launching the first National Program for developing and implementing welfare technology in local care services. The paper presents a general overview on the Norwegian modern policy for care services, and then it will discuss some evidences from the Norwegian case-study, in order to better comprehend the new healthcare practices integrated with particular technological devices.

Indeed, over the past years, the local authorities engaged in delivering care services have undergone the major reforms, taking advantage of the relatively stable period called “demographic moratorium” to plan new strategies and to build up different strategically policy in order to be better suited to face future demographic challenges. The modern policy in this area must be rooted in an “active ageing” perspective and in an “ageing in place” paradigm. Reviewing the main Norwegian political documents, it seems that the use of welfare technology opens up many opportunities. But what does happen in the municipalities, when welfare technology is implemented? Do the local projects and their outcomes mirror the government’s expectations? Given such questions, the qualitative method appears to be the most appropriate. Therefore, the study is based on semi-structured interviews address to researchers and professors belonging to multidisciplinary research team, employees of the Norwegian Government, chief of health public services and caregivers too, aimed to show the changes, the benefits and the drawbacks of the technology-driven care practices in a Norwegian municipality. However, due to the language and restricted privacy laws, the findings will lack the contribution of the users’ perspective, which instead should be needed for a complete and multifocal analysis. The main evidences highlight that patients would benefit from remote, real-time monitoring of their health conditions, while staying at their homes, without being heavily dependent from the services. On the other side, the care operators would have new tools to optimize the daily tasks and interventions, also reducing their workload, with the consequence of a more efficient allocation of the human and economical resources. Nevertheless, the implementation of care technology brings out some ethical dilemmas and juridical issues. Currently, many efforts are still needed, before a win-win solution is reached.

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