Employing family caregivers in home care agencies: Fostering an innovative model or blurring boundaries?

Agnes Leu, Iren Bischofberger, Wilfried Schnepp September 5, 2015 Workshop presentation at the 6th International Carers Conference, Gothenburg

Careum Research

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Programme

- International and Swiss context of family carers
- Project development and preliminary results for employing family carers at home care agencies
- Conclusion



Carers' needs internationally

- **C** Choice
- A Access
- **R** Respect
- **E** Education
- **R** Recognition
- **S** Support





The Swiss family carer and home care context

- Since 1990ies: Various research studies on family carers, mainly with a gerontological focus
- Since 2007: Ongoing R+D programm «work & care» at Careum Research on reconciling employment and family care
 → qualitative interview data showed home care agencies' practices of employing family carers
- Since 2014: National action plan «Supporting family carers»
- Most of home care nursing procedures are covered by the compulsory health insurance package, but not household chores and not companionship
- So far no data from national family caregiver survey



Aims of employing family carers at home care agencies

- To foster quality of care and patient safety
- To strengthen employability of family carers through recognition of their caregiving contributions for a professional career
- To guarantuee social security of family carers even through minimal employment



 To contribute to the shortage of staff in home care agencies

Our project activities so far...

- 2012, May: Event on the UN International Day of Families
- 2012 ff: Several publications and presentations
- 2013: Pilot R+D project on employing family carers
- 2015: Grant preparation of a large R+D project together with a health care insurer and home care agencies

Pflegende Angehörige als Angestellte in der Spitex: Eine Annäherung aus rechtlicher, qualifikatorischer und konzeptioneller Perspektive



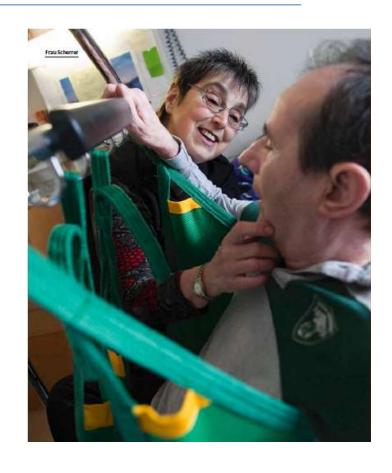
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Preliminary results (1) Legal aspects of employing of family carers

- Employment according to general staffing standards, including salary
- Quality assurance according to existing legal regulations for home care agencies
- Recruitement includes additional discussion about motivation, relationship, and consent from the client



Main point: Employing family carers is one supportive option amongst others.

Preliminary results (2) Caregiving aspects of employing family carers

- Training courses & supervision of employed family carers by nurses & management
- Family and biographical relationship ease or hamper caregiving performance
- Home care agencies declare authority, support, facilitation of conflicts, and case management for employed family carers and respective households



Main point: Home care agencies start to develop a mindset of family carers' high quality contributions within the team.

In sum: Meeting carers' needs trough employment at a home care agency

Various needs – various choices
Professional documentation, team membres, social security
Better understanding between family carers and health care professionals, mutual respect for each others' roles
Transfer of experiences from family care to recognition for a formal health care qualification
Recognition of family carers' opinions within home care agency teams; legal procedures enhance recognition of knowledge
Integration in a team enhances quality control and patient safety in private households, particularly in different to reach (rural) areas

Conclusion from a CEO CEO of a large urban home care agency

- «We should not evaluate the new employment model by potential worst case scenarios.»
- «We have not come as far as we should, but we will not go back again.»

Contact

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