

# Health Promoting Visits – a way to improve family support among the oldest old

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**Marie Ernsth Bravell  
Eva Telander**



JÖNKÖPING UNIVERSITY  
*School of Health and Welfare*



**JÖNKÖPINGS  
KOMMUN**

# Background

Since 1998, the municipal support for families caring for a relative has developed and improved, much thanks to the initiative “Anhörig 300”

The purpose of the initiative was to stimulate municipalities to develop support for families caring for elderly, disabled and chronically ill, in collaboration with the relatives and volunteering organizations.

# Service by law

July 1, 2009, a new writing in Chapter 5. 10 § in SSA stated that:

"The Social Welfare Committee (in the municipalities) are obliged to provide support to facilitate for relatives caring for a next of kin that is long-term sick or elderly or who support a next of kin with disability."

# Jönköping municipality

Jönköping municipality has provided family support to older relatives since the 1990s. In 2002 a “consultant for relatives” was hired, and since 2009 there are “family support teams” available to support relatives. The development of family support in Jönköping municipality has developed in phases and is still ongoing.

Most of the support offered are targeted to married/cohabiting who care for their relatives at home.

# Aim

- ❖ To increase the knowledge about rights to family support among the oldest old citizens and to offer individualized support if there are needs and wishes.
- ❖ To investigate the experience of family caregiving and family support, and to investigate if there are any gender differences in needs and wishes of family support.

# Method

Identification of respondents was performed by a synchronization of civil registers and municipal records (Magna Cura). Criteria for inclusion were cohabiting persons where:

- The oldest person in the household would be among the oldest in the municipality (we started from the oldest in the municipality, and went down, the oldest attending was 99 years)
- None of them have contact with elderly care

# Method

Identified persons received a written letter and a phone call, with the offer of a home visit with and a question concerning participation in an interview. Both of the persons in the household should agree to be included. The goal was to reach 150 pairs, ie 300 participants. When this figure was reached, the age of the oldest in the household has reached 89 years.

The interviews were conducted mostly on one occasion and by two people, so that the cohabiting couples were interviewed separately.

## Results

|                 | Both are independent<br>N (%) | Care for a relative<br>N (%) | Support each other<br>N (%) | Receive care from a relative<br>N (%) |
|-----------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Total           | 135 (45,2)                    | 70 (23,4)                    | 22 (7,4)                    | 72 (24,1)                             |
| Men             | 68 (45,9)                     | 27 (18,2)                    | 10 (6,8)                    | 43 (29,1)                             |
| Women           | 67 (44,4)                     | 43 (28,5)                    | 12 (7,9)                    | 29 (19,2)                             |
| Marital status: |                               |                              |                             |                                       |
| Married         | 126 (47,9)                    | 61 (23,2)                    | 18 (6,8)                    | 58 (22,1)                             |
| Co-habitant     | 6 (46,2)                      | 4 (30,8)                     | 0 (0)                       | 3 (23,1)                              |
| Widowed         | 2 (13,3)                      | 1 (6,7)                      | 2 (13,3)                    | 10 (66,7)                             |
| Divorced        | 0                             | 3                            | 2                           | 1                                     |
| Live with:      |                               |                              |                             |                                       |
| Spouse          | 130 (48,1)                    | 61 (22,6)                    | 18 (6,7)                    | 61 (22,6)                             |
| Child/parent    | 5 (17,2)                      | 9 (31,0)                     | 4 (13,8)                    | 11 (37,9)                             |
| Age, mean (sd)  | 87,7 (4,6)                    | 82,7 (10,0)                  | 86,1 (8,8)                  | 89,8 (4,6)                            |



We help each other. None of us has special chores but we usually take turns to clean and wash. But I do the cooking and my husband do the shopping. I'll go with him to the supermarket, he picks the goods, and he pay, because I cannot see. Then we put the goods in my basket on my walker (Female, 91 years).



Photo: Susanne Johannesson

## Gender differences

|                              | Men<br>N (%) | Women<br>N (%) |
|------------------------------|--------------|----------------|
| Both are independent         | 66 (50,4)    | 67 (49,6)      |
| Care for a relative          | 25 (37,9)    | 41 (62,1)      |
| Support each other           | 9 (42,9)     | 12 (57,1)      |
| Receive care from a relative | 43 (61,4)    | 27 (38,6)      |
| Volunteering                 |              |                |
| Yes                          | 39 (48,8)    | 41 (51,2)      |
| No                           | 41 (41,4)    | 58 (58,6)      |
| Used to                      | 63 (58,3)    | 45 (41,7)      |
| Wish for support             |              |                |
| Yes                          | 17 (32,7)    | 35 (67,3)      |
| NO                           | 14 (48,3)    | 15 (51,7)      |
| Not applicable               | 113 (53,8)   | 98 (46,2)      |



## Requested support :

|                               | Men<br>N (%)     | Women<br>N (%)   |
|-------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Direct support                | 28 (46,7)        | 32 (53,3)        |
| Respite                       | 8 (23,5)         | <b>26 (76,5)</b> |
| Economical                    | 5 (71,4)         | 2 (28,6)         |
| Social activities             | 5 (45,5)         | 6 (54,5)         |
| Information                   | 2 (33,3)         | 4 (66,7)         |
| Feel-good-time                | 2 (66,7)         | 1 (33,3)         |
| Counceling                    | 3 (23,1)         | <b>10 (76,9)</b> |
| Someone to call<br>immediate  | 4 (40)           | 6 (60)           |
| Practical help                | 1 (50)           | 1 (50)           |
| Don't know/<br>Not applicable | <b>81 (58,7)</b> | 57 (41,3)        |

I could not cope without my wife. If something happens to her, it is a nursing home that applies to me. We would need someone to call, someone who can help us if we need help. Our friends at PRO's (senior citizen organization) is getting older, we can not expect them to help us if we need help with anything (Male, 90 years).



Photo: Susanne Johannesson

# Conclusion

Many of the oldest cope on their own, or with the support of each other, and they also want to do so, there is a strong desire for independence.

The assistance requested is often such support that already exists, but maybe not in the precise design as requested.

Men and women have different ideas about family support.



Photo: Susanne Johannesson

# Thank you for the attention

[Marie.Ernsth-Bravell@ju.se](mailto:Marie.Ernsth-Bravell@ju.se)