

Towards a monitoring strategy for young carers in Flanders

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Background

Policy context in Flanders

Policy in Flemish community: bringing care and care recipients into community

2016: First plan on informal carers (Vandeurzen): special chapter on young carers (+ resolution in Flemish parliament)

- Focus on awareness and support
- Which studies are needed to have a better view on young carers?

Background

Research context in Flanders

Lauwers (2013)

First exploration of situation of young carers (10y-18y) in Flanders

Qualitative research with 17 children, 12 parents, 1 focus group

Vanthuyne, Moyson & Coone (2015)

Literature review and expert consultation to explore themes and methods to study young carers

➔ Conclusion: “Emerging” awareness and policy response (Leu & Becker, 2016)

Monitoring & research strategy

Exploring study of 'informal care in Flanders'

→ Central questions:

- × What should we know? What do we know? What are the knowledge gaps? How to fill those gaps?

Giving 'young and young adult carers' an equal place in the monitoring system of informal care in Flanders

2 age groups

- Young carers -> below the age of 18 year
- Young adult carers -> 18 - 24 year

Central questions

Who are young (adult) carers in Flanders? How many are there?

**What are influencing factors of being a young (adult) carer?
How do young (adult) carers differ from their peers?**

What are consequences and outcomes of being a young (adult) carer and what are influencing factors of consequences and outcomes?

How is young (adult) caregiving changing?

How are young (adult) carers doing in Flanders in comparison to other regions in Belgium or other countries?

Young carers - Inspiration from other countries

School is a relevant (support) and effective (response) context to select young carers

Concentration around secondary school age

Selective sample studies vs. a-select multilevel sample studies

Make use of an existing survey vs. developing a new survey

Information comes from different sources (school, teacher, ...) and combination with qualitative research methods

In Flanders

Several existing school surveys of high quality

- HBSC
- LISO
- JOP

Make use of existing surveys

- Problem of 'overquestioning' of schools
- Low prevalence of caregiving

Possibilities for Flanders

HBSC-Flanders (2018)

- × Optional package (OP) of questions developed by the Netherlands (De Roos & De Boer)
- × In Flanders: OP + a larger package of questions
- × Possibility of comparison with other HBSC-countries

Other

- × 'young carers' and school policy
- × Connecting data from HBSC to data at school level
- × Adding a longitudinal insight into 'young caregiving'

18y – 24y

“Emerging adulthood”

Distinct period of life in industrialized countries

Arnett (2000) “Emerging adulthood”: examine life possibilities and gradually arrive at more enduring choices in love, work, and worldviews

Hamilton & Adamson (2013):

Caring responsibilities --> imagined future possibilities

More profound impact on physical and mental health and well-being

Distinct topics

Pathways towards study, work and independent living & balance with caring tasks

Support and services: formal and informal

Perspective on future

18y – 24y

International studies & literature

Concern in literature

No study designs which allow generalisation for 18-24-olds

- Specific qualitative studies
- Sempik and Becker 2013/2014: 295 young carers from 14y-25y, online questionnaire (<-> selection bias)
- Levine e.a. (2005): selected young carers 18y-25y in national surveys of adult caregivers (<-> limited sample, not customized)

Census

18y – 24y

What is known in Flanders?

No specific studies

Existing repetitive surveys among general population

→ Small numbers:

× SCV survey: 42 Flanders

× Health interview survey: 11 Flanders, 50 Brussels capital region

× European Social Survey: 41 Flanders

→ Only general questions

18y – 24y

Possibilities

Young adult carers go in different directions after secondary school

- Employment, unemployment, college or university
- No general sampling frame

Young adult carers/ care recipient as service users

- selection bias

Existing studies of youngsters

- Yes, but add specific questions on informal care (big enough sample and specific questions?)

Existing studies of general population with adult carers

- Yes, but oversampling and specific questions for adult young carers

Discussion & conclusion

Other ideas or possibilities

Availability of short measurement instruments

The youngest children

International comparison

Making the bridge between monitoring and a supportive system for young (adult) caregivers