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

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Workshop presentation at the 6th International Carers Conference, Gothenburg
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 guarantee 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
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
- Recruitment 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 through employment at a home care agency

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<th>C</th>
<th>Choice</th>
<th>Various needs – various choices</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Professional documentation, team members, social security</td>
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<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Respect</td>
<td>Better understanding between family carers and health care professionals, mutual respect for each others’ roles</td>
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<td>E</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Transfer of experiences from family care to recognition for a formal health care qualification</td>
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<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Recognition</td>
<td>Recognition of family carers’ opinions within home care agency teams; legal procedures enhance recognition of knowledge</td>
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<td>S</td>
<td>Support</td>
<td>Integration in a team enhances quality control and patient safety in private households, particularly in different to reach (rural) areas</td>
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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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