

Healthcare in private households



An important aspect of practice-oriented research and development ...



... is the care and support provided by (and for) relatives.

Looking after relatives: The Careum School of Health is researching this socially relevant topic. What support do those looking after relatives need? How do people balance looking after relatives and paid work? And how can people grow old in their familiar environment, perhaps even up to end of life?

Around half of the population are faced with the challenge of looking after dependent relatives in the course of their lives. Without relatives, the often time-intensive process of looking after someone cannot be delivered with the funding or structures available. Until now, relatives have been performing this huge job free of charge. And the tendency towards care at home is growing, with more and more people growing old. In contrast, there is a growing shortage of specialist personnel and healthcare costs continue to rise. The health policy slogan "outpatient rather than inpatient" has also made home care an increasingly important but extremely fragile vision.

Innovative care provision and living arrangements

It's obvious that it takes measures, services and new ideas to support and take the pressure off people looking after relatives. New forms of home-based healthcare are in demand. The various service providers must strengthen coordination and improve links. Innovative care provision and living arrange-

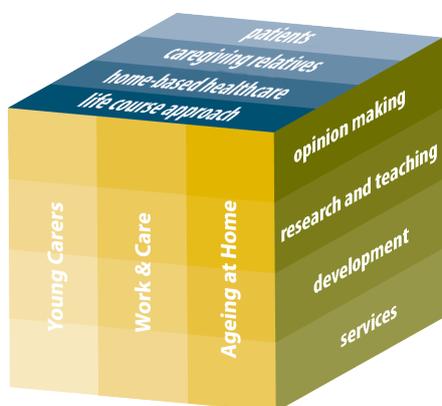
ments are required so that elderly people can grow old independently at home, with some support from technology too.

The Research Institute of the Careum School of Health is using a practice-oriented approach to investigate some of the issues that are currently the focus of care and provision research with the help of an interdisciplinary team of researchers from a care, health, social, humanities and legal background, often in collaboration with national and international partners.

Research regarding relatives over an entire life span

Caregiving relatives are by no means only middle-aged or elderly. At any stage in life people can get into a situation where a family member or someone close falls ill or has an accident and requires care and looking after. Sometimes those taking on the tasks associated with caring for and looking after others are just children or adolescents. Adults and people in employment generally manage care situations when others need looking after – say, when parents grow old or family members become severely ill. Caregiving relatives may already be pensioners themselves when they start caring for their life partner or relatives requiring care. This broader take on relatives from all age groups is also reflected in the three research programmes entitled "Young Carers", "work & care" and "Ageing at home".

The three research programmes have their own specific focus, but work together more closely in relation to overarching topics.



■ 3 research programmes ■ overarching key topics ■ fields of activity

“Young Carers”

In Switzerland, almost eight per cent of children, adolescents and young adults care for and look after close relatives. Frequent absences, the impact on school work, problems concentrating and a lack of sleep can diminish educational prospects. The perennial research and development programme “Young Carers”, is therefore developing specific support measures – with an emphasis on practicality and together with the young adults concerned. One area of focus for the ongoing projects is the critical transition from school to work. Adolescents and young adults should get the help required to make a successful and smooth start to their working life despite their care tasks.

- The international EU research project “*Psychosocial Support for Promoting Mental Health and Well-being among Adolescent Young Carers in Europe (ME-WE)*” (which runs until 2020) compares the situation in different European countries, for example. Measures are being developed and tested to improve mental health and the well-being of the young people concerned.
- The project “*Young carers and young adult carers between school, education and work*” (Ebnet Foundation, Beisheim Foundation, Health Promotion Switzerland) is investigating how to better support young carers and young adult carers in the transition phase between school, training and work.

“work & care”

Combining paid work with caring for relatives: this has been the central theme of the programme “work & care” since 2007. Where do relatives in employment find relief and support? How can businesses promote a corporate culture that accommodates “work & care”?

- The practical project known as “*work & care modular*” aims to offer companies expertise from long-standing research and development programmes by the Research Institute of the Careum School of Health in the form of a web-based and

flexible module. The Federal Office for Gender Equality supports the project financially in accordance with the Gender Equality Act.

- The binational research and development project known as “*Distance Caregiving*”, in cooperation with Ludwigsburg Protestant University of Applied Sciences based in Germany, is about how those living apart from relatives can still support them (third-party funding: German Federal Ministry of Education and Research, SILQUA programme). Follow-up projects have already begun.
- The focus of the project known as “*Double-Duty Caregiving Plus*” (promoted by: Nursing Science Foundation Switzerland) is on health professionals who also care for and look after relatives in their own time. How do healthcare providers assess the role of these expert relatives in relation to safety-related incidents (e.g. problems due to medication or hygiene)?
- The platform www.workandcare.ch provides video contributions, publications and advice on the topic of work & care.

“Ageing at home”

The research programme “Ageing at home” investigates a wide range of issues related to the topic of “ageing”. The focus is always on the old or elderly in a social, care, medical and economic context. Several projects are concerned with research into topics of ageing society and technology:

- “Ageing at home” is involved in three projects run by the international research network known as “IBH-Living Lab AAL” at the International University of Lake Constance (IBH): “*Technology at district level*”, “*Home Health Living Lab*” and “*Barrier-free tourism spaces for Lake Constance*”.
- Together with the University of Siegen, the NRP 74 project known as “*Caring Community Living Labs*” sponsored by the Swiss National Science Foundation is about developing models, supported by technology, for long-term care at home. Social spaces for mutual learning called living labs will be introduced in three chosen municipalities. These living labs will explore needs and develop, implement and evaluate new services.

Careum School of Health
 Research Institute
 Pestalozzistrasse 5
 8032 Zurich
 Tel. +41 (0)43 222 50 44
 Fax +41 (0)43 222 50 05
info@careum.ch
www.careum.ch/forschung

