

Care Situations in Different European Countries: The Impact of Formal and Informal Support

Objectives

In the context of an EU funded project (EUROFAMCARE) a six countries study on the situation of family carers of older people in relation to the existence, familiarity, availability, usage and acceptability of supporting services has been conducted. The six countries represent different welfare systems with different care policies and support services towards older people and their family members.

Methods

Interviews with 1,000 family carers in each of the six countries (DE, EL, IT, PL, SE, UK) were conducted using a standardised Common Assessment Tool. A cluster analysis based on the Ward method was used to construct six clusters which are identical in each of the six countries. The clusters represent different care situations which are comparable on a national as well as European level.

Results

The presentation will start with an overview on the different care situations. Then it will describe relevant factors which constitute specific care arrangements. For the international comparison, one important factor is the country (as an umbrella term for cultural and social country specifics). For the inter- and intra-national comparison, differences between the family carers' perceived burden and well-being related to age, (in-)formal networks and/or support, income etc. are important. Our hypothesis is that in countries with a smaller availability of support service, the informal networks play a much stronger role for the care arrangements than in those with a bigger number of support services and alternatives. In the latter countries there is a wider range and higher variety of "mixed" care arrangements consisting in different compositions of family carers, informal networks and professional support.