

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

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**Kalaidos University
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The University for Working Professionals.

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

Pflegende Angehörige als Angestellte in der Spitex: Eine Annäherung aus rechtlicher, qualifikatorischer und konzeptioneller Perspektive



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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

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

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.»

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