

Title

How are Family Carers of Elderly People Supported in Different Countries? A Pan-European Review.

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Objectives

In all European countries increasing old-age is combined with more frequent and longer phases of being in need of care and in some cases a need for long-term-care for several years. Family carers constitute approximately 80 % of all caregivers in total, though the majority of family carers is neither trained in nursing nor has developed sufficient coping skills. Physical, social and psychological burdens and disorders are likely and frequent consequences. The family carers of today are at risk of becoming those in need of care tomorrow.

Methods

The EU-funded project EUROFAMCARE (www.uke.uni-hamburg.de/eurofamcare) will provide a European review of the situation of family carers of elderly people in relation to the existence, familiarity, availability, use and acceptability of supporting services. Besides a six-countries study, which analyses about 6,000 family care situations in different regional sites, a pan-European wide integration of expertise will be achieved through National Background Reports from 23 European countries, showing the state of family care and support services in 2003/2004.

Results

The presentation will provide a European review of supporting measures for older people's caregivers in different countries, focussing on care policies for family carers, service characteristics and coverage for family carers, the costs and benefits of caring as well as current trends and future perspectives.

Conclusion

The review will help carers' organisations, policy and decision makers, researchers and practitioners to identify starting points for change management at various policy levels to promote social policies and practice towards family carers of the elderly.

Keywords

Family Carers, Ageing, Services, Prevention, Social Policy