

Home Services as a Better Alternative for the Elderly Living in Residential Institutions

MSc. Brunilda Dervishaj Hoxhaj

Phd student, Department of Social Work & Social Policies, Faculty of Social Sciences
University of Tirana, Albania; brunilda.dervishaj@live.com

Doi:10.5901/ajis.2016.v5n1p189

Abstract

This is a qualitative study which aims to present the experiences of older people living in residential institutions in Tirana. The results are based on the analysis of eight interviews with elderly people that live in residential institutions and experts/services providers for the elderly. Participants in the study were intentionally chosen. For data collection were used semi-structured interviews, which were designed at the end of literature review process. At the end of interviews transcription process, for data analysis was used contrast method, that helped in identification of categories and themes building. The study found out that services provisions has to be extended to the specific situation of elderly. Home-care services are more desired for the elderly, while long-term care services are considered as the last alternative to be taken as solution. Because older people prefer to stay in their homes, where they know their friends or neighbors and can associate memories with each object around them. Elderly appreciate also the impact of day centers in strengthening the role of the family as primary care institution. This research can be used by policymakers and private sector to improve and expand the variety of services for elderly. This study may also encourage initiative of others researchers for depth studies in this area.

Keywords: Elderly, residential services, home-care services, day centers

1. Introduction

The increase of the demographic perspective of elders in our country is making more evident the beginning of "aging population" fact. In conditions where the role of family as a basic institution of care on elders is becoming less, the request of them to have residential care has grown. The residential care isn't consider as the best alternative from the elders, but as the only alternative which is offered. The increase of requestes from elders to be part of residential services hasn't been in parallel with the increase of institutions capacities to offer this service. In group focuses and in interviews realized during the phd studies has been note that the beneficiaries are with different heterogeneous characteristics according to the genders, ages, and even the health state. Some of them have expressed that if will offered services like home visits, they will not consider as an alternative the residential services. The residential service it keeps them away from their family environment but even persons which are in age groups 60-70 years old and are in a good health state compared with elders (over 75-85 years old) which needs medical assistance continuously, they think it might be more intergrativ for them to live in their houses where can benefits part time social assistance.

1.1 Study's purpose

In focus of this study are the elders which are living in residential institutions, how they experience the living in this institutions.

1.2 Researches questions

- Which are the perceptions and thoughts of elders about residential services?
- Which are the feeling that they have for living in residential institutions of social care?
- What kind of social care services should be offered for the elders who lives alone?

2. Literature Review

Even though the Defend Social Sistem has been extended with offering community services for elders in just some main cities, this haven't effect in the reduction of elder's number which ask residential services.

In this way should be identifying services which might "go" there where the elder is, so it can be avoided the opposite.

In other developed countries for example France, the residential services it seems as a good alternative for the elders that need a continuous medical care, meanwhile has been increase the number of elders which take the home services¹. The majority of elders prefers to stay on their houses, where they know their neighbors and can connect memories with each part of the furnitures and with the objects around them, instead of going in a residential institution.

In France "ageing in your place" is the term used more currently, where the elders it might offered home services for cleaning, shopping, cooking. This help it might come from family members, relatives, or neighbors, or even members of religion communities.

Another help for the elders that choose to live in their homes it might come from the Local Agencies for Elders, where the elders can call for needed helps.

In USA to be more close of elders needs, which are in a status and choose to live alone it is created a website care.com, in this website it can easily contact with trained persons which offers home services for elders.

This service it might be easily applied even in our country¹.

The service of home assistance for elders which lives alone it offers assistance for daily activities like washing/place cleaning and cloths or other personal objects of elders, food, help in paying the monthly bills of water and electricity, friends visits, ect. It doesn't needs professional care. It can be managed and supported even from civil actors of society.

- Home medical assistance for elders that do not need full time health care but suffered from a chronic illness. This service it might be offered partly from the National Social Service(national budget) and different NBO that might operate in the country.
- Extended the network of community services empowering the family. The daily care for the elders it offers health services, social services like social activities, physicals, religious, creative, and supportive services for the elders with function damages for a prearranged time of day, less than 24 h. In this way the families of the elders they can follow without interruption their activities during the day.

In the Italian country seems more worthwhile spreading the monetary benefits for the informal care offers for the elders rather rising a stable insurance system of informal care¹. In Italy the community services for elders, but even the home visits or personal assistance services in home are appreciated like the most desirable from the elders, meanwhile the residential service is seemed like the last alternative for the care of the elders with specific needs².

Meanwhile in Canada home services are appreciated with a low cost compared with the residential service¹. In this way should be kept in mind the desire of elders to stay in home and the national budget request to offer services with low cost, the home services are evaluated like the most righteous and acceptable.

Exist great changes in using longterm care services in Germany, depended from the social status, ethnicity and gender. Those with a high social status mostly they use home services offered from their private institutions, meanwhile those who are with a low social status they use money compensation¹. Even though in Germany always is getting enlarge the network of private services offers for elders, where the most favorite service is home service².

The theory of Empower and Jurist is one of the theories that can effect in increasing the participation of individuals and communities in taking decision for cases that are sensible for them and touches directly their lives. Jurist wants to present the interest of unpower groups of individuals which effects the progress of social structures. The empower is focused in increasing the abilities of individuals to take decisions related with the services that touches them, growing the selfconfidence to effect individuals or social structures. The theory of empower and jurist it will empower the elders to ask, convincing, services that they consider more suitable and right for them. This theory will help to increase the knowledges of the elders for the capacities and the rights they have to effect in the structure of social services. According to Lee, Mullender and Eard the Theory of Empower is evaluated for the practical use in empowering of individuals or groups following different social causes, meanwhile Schneider and Lester are focused at role of the Theory of Jurist on progressing of individual situations or groups following different social causes¹.

3. Methodology

The revision of studies realized in different countries, like those very developed(USA, Canada, France, Germany, Italy) and on countries more close to our culture(Bulgary) has been served as a first instrument used for the collections of data, determining clearly the study field and the researcher questions. The second method of collecting data it was used the half structure interview, all the participations in study were choosed in a purpose way.

3.1 The participations on study

In this study were realized 8 interviews. Were involved 6 elders which are living in the House of Elders in Tirana, three of them were females and three males. Also it was realized an interview with a social worker of the institution and another interview with the specialist for elders of the National Social Services.

4 ladies and 4 gentlemen

That are living in residential institutions

Age above 60

Persons with different professions

The participations were choosed attentively

It was determined the age above 60 for elders that will be interviewed according to VKM number 425 for filling the files of being part of residential national institutions the age is one of the clear determined criterion¹.

3.2 The procedure of data's collecting

An interview lasted 15-20 minutes. All the interviewers were opened and didn't hesitate to answered and to share the experiences and their feelings. For collecting information was used the method of noting down during the interview.

3.3 The method of data's collecting

The basical instrument of collecting datas was used the half structure interview. All the interviewers were cleared preliminarily according to the purpose of this study and the nature of referred questions.

Some of the questions included in this half structure interview were:

- ✓ *What do you think for the typology of soacial services that are offered to elders in our country?*
- ✓ *Which one of the services for elders that you might know even as an concept will evaluate like the most adaptable or likable for elders?*
- ✓ *How could you describe your feelings according to the residential service?*

3.4 The method of data analysies

In the end of the whole proces of collacting datas, next step was the trascription of all interviews. In the end of the whole transcribed interviews and thier coding was used the method of contrast comperment whcih helped in the categorically of datas, identifiycation of categories, creating topics of combining possible relations between identify categories.

4. Data's Analyzes and Interpretation

The results of datas in this study will be appeared in three main topics:

5. Attitudes about Services Offered in Our Country for Elders

The elders emphasized that services offered are limited, do not offeres services that can improve their lives in home. They emphasize if they will have an oppurtunity to choose, may desire to live in their family environment. Fifth of interviewed elders tolds that during the time of filling the right necessary files to be part of residential service, have been intersted at National Social Services officies in their cities, for other services that might be offered to elders that do not have family supports or do not have family/relatives and have choosed to live alone in their homes.

The Specialist by National Social Service when was asked about the variegation of services typologies that are offered to elders, was expressed that have emphasized incompletetions in extension and typology. According to him it is very necessary to extend the typology of social services for elders considering as a prime service offered the home services. This it will bring a low cost for the nation budget.

Meanwhile the social worker by Home of Elders in Tirana shows that the typology of social services for elders it's very limited. She expressed that might be in total three or four daily centres for elders in all country and even the public sector and private one are focused in offering residential service for elders.

- *Well i don't know very good the words that are used but do not have very much services about us the elders.*

It seems they don't can make it short and close us in insitution. I have a house and i would like to live there, there are my neighbors, my place. It will be very good if persons came homve for some hours to help or to measure my blood presson. I asked at the place where i filled the files before of coming here but they said to me that doesn't have this kind of services.(the elder)

- *The public sector and even the private one offeres more residential services , in the whole country it might be three or four daily centres. Could not talk about services because only the residential service is offered(social worker)*

5.1 Services of home care & Residential services

Home services are evaluated from elders like the mos desirable and intergrativ because it can enable againg in environments where have pass their lives, close to objects or furnitures that are valour for them. Home services makes possible for them to meet their neighbors, friends, for the morning habits, example drinking coffe, reading newspapers or walking.

The social worker tolds that most of elders they pass their day talking about their homes, clothes, personal objects, morning coffe and converstations with friends or neighbors. Obviously this shows their desire to live by their family environment.

The specialist nearby National Socials Services talked about the advantages of home services not only for relieving the elders lives but even for minimizing the costs that will bring to nation budget the application of those services. Also he emphasized that even the residential service for elders it would improved more because the number of the beneficiaries will be reduces.

Almost all of elders emphasized that home services will make them happy, even though one of interviewed elders showed that even if exist the home services again he would choose to stay in institution because it doesn't has a home and his childrens don't want him to live with them. The old ladies staies home because they be concerned for the home meanwhile males tolds more about walking and the routine that have created with their friends.

All the time i listen the elders telling each other for their homes, furniture, friends and their neighbors. It sad when you see that during all the time, days pass trying to creat the life they had. The service it is offered to improve the conditions where they are not to remove the joy. Indeed i could say that the residential service it a necessary affliction, but for them who do not have home or relatives and are in an old age and not in a good health condiction. (Social worker)

- *Home services despite that are very desirable from elders, brings even a reducer cost than residential services. Because it is not offered home services it is growing more and more day by day the request for residential services, this is making that institutions are extended their capacities. But all of this has a cost. So, if every town hall or commune will enable part time home services where should offer social assistance but even medical it would be alright. This is not hard to be realized but it needs time and a good institutional cordination, certainly .(Specialsit nearby SHSSH)*

Thank Lord we don't have health problems but it will be good to have a nurse in home to measure blood preasure or to help with the medications or like our friends says to do one day on and one day off to do for in our home. Becuase i have a big house, and it can be humided and damage my clothes. My furnitures are new. I'm not here because of pleasure. There i know all in the neighborhood, i have pass my life there. Drinkin coffe at my home because i was alone, staying there comfortable, talking, this is what we old laydes wants.(old lady)

5.2 Daily/ comunity services

Almost all the elders evaluates very important even the daily services or comunity nearby their locality. Those services offeres different activities like parties, discussing environments, games(dominoes, pool), reading news papers, eating, for example having a tea or coffe or eating lunch. According to them these services are very desirable not only form the elders that are living alone but even from those how are living with their families. In this way they will pass a long time in the center and will not occlude their families that can have an active social life.

Accordin to the social worker, daily centers offers necessary services for comunity and relief the life of the elders family, so in this way it increas the integration of elders in social life.

Meanwhile the specialist of National Social Service emphasized that daily centers will effect directly in reducing the number of beneficiaries in residential centers because it will offered services nearby elders house. Daily centers are

preferred mostly from male elders rather than females. Almost all the male elders appreciated a lot the efficacy of those centers.

- *If would have centers to pass our day it will be good. For example, my son and daughter in low are the whole day working and their child is in kindgarden till 5 o'clock. I decided to come here because i caused to them argues, my daughter in low camed late from work and the time flies taking care of baby. I was occluding them, i couldn't help them, i was just staying all the time. I hearded about this kind of center in Kamez,they come to pick you up from home. That's good because i can not walk, there was so nice, playing dominou with friends, drinking caffe with other elders and eating.(the elder)*
- *I am convinced that it will have daily centers almost in every city or comune, it will be reduced the number of elders that are part of residential services. Not all the elders needs 24 hour service. Daily centers offers differens activites for holidays but even for ordinary days. In this way the elders wouldn't feel alone and those who lives with their famillys it wont occlude them. (Specialist of National Social Service)*

I think that opning daily centers in every city or comune of the country it will be easier for the family to take care of elders. The major part of day elders can pass it in the centre and for their family it would be easier to follow their activites. Daily centres remove from them a big burden and avoids the conflicts.(social worker)

6. Conclusion

Social services that are offered to elders are very limited according to the typology. Residential service is evaluated from elders like less desirabled but it still be the main service and only alternative for elders that lives alone and in different social situations. From this study also it results that that elders see the residential service as a necessary affliction where staying home is impossible for them because of the absence of the necessary services.

Also social workers of residential service have emphasize the importance of home service as an alternative that may intergrate elders in society without dispatch them from the their friends and family. Residential services is estimated as a good alternative for elders above of 80 years old or which might be not in a good healthy state.

According to the study home services are considered from elders, but even from social workers for elders, as a good alternative. It can enalbe ageing in environments where they have pass their life, close to their objects or furnitures which are very important for them. Home services enalbe to elders to meet their friends and neighbors for the morning habits for example drinking caffe, reading newspaper or walking.

Extending comunity services or daily centers will affects directly in reducing the requests of the elders to be part of residential services and will help in strengthening the family as a main institution of care for elders.

From datas analyzies the elders evaluates very important the daily services nearby of their place. Daily centres offeres different activites like celebretaing holidays, environment for discussung, games (pool, dominou), reading newspapers, consuming food for example, drinking tea and cafe, or eating lunch. According to the results of the study the elders see those services very desirable not only for whom are living alone but even for whom lives with their families. In this way they will pass a major part of time in center and wont occlude their families that might have an active social life.

7. Further Proposals

This study gives its contribution in identifying the most desirabled social services, most adapted and integrated for the elders. The discoveries of the study might be interested for further and studies according to social services for elders. This study it might determined the initiatives of public sector and private one for offering integrated services for elders.

References

- <http://www.homeinstead.com/international/franchise-opportunity/Pages/France-Senior-Home-Care.aspx>
- <http://www.care.com/senior-care-home-care-versus-nursing-home-care-p1017-q14698.html>
- <http://www.lamoro.it/pdf/erderlyneverlonelyguida.pdf>
- http://www.ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/elderly_care_en.pdf
- http://www.ancien-longtermcare.eu/sites/default/files/ENEPR1%20_ANCIEN_%20RR%20No%2080%20Italy%20edited%20final.pdf
- <http://www.homecaresstudy.com/news/ss1pre.html>
- http://en.wikipedia.org/èiki/Health_Care_System_of_Elderly_in_Germany
- <http://bibliothek.wzb.eu/pdf/2004/i04-302.pdf>
- Payne, M. (2005) "Modern Social Work Theory".

Law no.9355, dt 10.03.2005 "The assistance and Social Services"
Paragraph 4 of article 102 of the Constitution of the Republic of Albania të Kushtetutës së Republikës VKM no.658, date 17.10.2005
"Standards of Social Services"

Additional materials

1st apendix

Interview (the transcript of an elder's interview)

Study's purpose

I am Brunilda Dervishaj, student at Social Science Faculty of Tirana.

Currently i'm pursuing phd studies according to an integrate system of services offered to elders. I am realizing a research for acadamic purpose. Together we will navigate an interview according to services offered in our country about elders. The interview will last 15-20 minutes. The datas will be totaly cofidential and will not be used in any file that outrage their privacy.

Interviewee: What do you think about the typology of social services offered to the elders in our country?

The elders: Well i don't know very good the words that have to been used but it doesn't has to much services for us, the elders. It seems like they are make it easier by puting all of us in an institution. I have a house and i would be happy to live there, i am so concerned to just keep it close, there i have my neighbors and my place. It will be so good if people might come in my home and help me for a couple of hours or to measure my blood preasure. I asked when i was traing to fill my files but they said it doesn't has other services.

Interviewee: Which one of the services that you might know even as an concept will evaluate more adaptable and likeable from the elders?

The elder: I would like so much to live at my house and there it might bring to me a lady or a gentelman, twice in a week, to help me with the house and to do shoping or to send a nurse to measure my blood preasure or to give me the medications. I asked at the Social Service but they said that doesn't have this kind of services in our nation and that's way i decided to come here. I have heard about an elder's house that elders go and pass there all the day and they eat, see tv and in evening they go back to their homes. Even those houses are good, rather than coming and living here.

Interviewee: Do you have any specifique reason why you estimate the service as an adaptable one?

The elder: Well, my house i haven't locked it,i have done it with my hands and the breath keeps it alive. There i have some friends and relatives and neighbors which we used to drink coffe. Here i am far away of my place. But i don't have what to do. I wouldn't be here comfortable as i be at my home.

Interviewee: How can you describe your feelings about residential service?

The elder: Here i have good friends and the stuff that serves us is really good, but we are as an elder's department, couldn't feel like home. It looks like the hospitals were are taking care for mentall illness. I haven't took even to much of my things because the wardrobe is to small and i need my things because i miss everything.

Interviewee: Can you tell me about the situation in the moment that you decided to live at the House of Elders?

The elder: I was great, living with my husband because my childrens are in Grecce, but after my husband pass away i was all the time alone. I needed services and people because i stayed to years alone and it was so hard.

Interviewee: Which is the attitude of your family and relatives about the decision of living in the House of Elders?

The elder: I said to my childrens that i will go and firstly they did't welcome it but i decided by myself. Even my neighbors saids to me to not leave and they offered their help but how much can they help me, each one has their home to take care firstly. Even here i am very good, they treat us good but nothing is as your home.

Interviewee: Thank you so much. Your answers are very worthful for my work

The elder: The old people be so pleased when youths like you come here. It fills us with joy.