

HESAV-SCHOOL OF HEALTH SCIENCES

POPULATION AGING, TRANSITIONAL AND END-OF-LIFE CARE

Multidisciplinary research, serving the health care field

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Population aging, transitional and end-of-life care

Within a context of increasing life expectancy, it is critically important to address issues pertaining to old age, in particular with regard to the experience of chronic illness.

Health and quality of life are legitimate aspirations for a population whose life expectancy is increasing. However, illness, most often chronic and progressive in nature, does accompany aging. This constitutes a major challenge for professionals and health care institutions, as well as for patients and their loved ones.

Multidisciplinary and inter-professional, this research axis is deployed in two complementary directions.

The first focuses on an analysis of the perspectives, needs and expectations of the elderly and their informal care givers. It also examines the representations and practices of the professionals that provide care for them, as well as the negotiations required in view of the different skills and approaches of all actors involved.

Care pathways and therapeutic transitions experienced by patients suffering from chronic illnesses, home care issues as well the roles and needs of informal caregivers are also the subject of studies conducted by our researchers.

The second focus is concerned with end-of-life issues. How do patients experiment the shift in care paradigms when treatment goals change from therapeutic to palliative? Management of symptoms, acceptability of treatment regimens, vulnerability, involvement of the primary network, and role of health care professionals are all issues to be explored, whether the palliative phase of care takes place at home or in a health care institution. Finally, research on assisted suicide provides an opportunity for highlighting different approaches of representations of health and death and bring to the fore the subtle and difficult negotiations between critically ill persons, their relatives and friends, and members of the health care teams.

Current research

Factors influencing self-management in adults with diabetes: an umbrella systematic review protocol.

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Background

Diabetes self-management (DSM) is influenced by a wide range of factors acting simultaneously and interfering with its actual application by patients. A variety of reviews regarding these factors does exist, however a more comprehensive scrutiny of the phenomenon is still lacking.

Aim

To identify and describe factors influencing DSM in adults with diabetes by summarizing available evidence concerning their type, classification, and relative importance.

Methods

A systematic examination of literature by applying JBI umbrella review strategies, for comparing the results of published systematic reviews. We will perform an extensive search in 11 bibliographic databases, and in reference lists of relevant articles up to January 2018. We will include systematic reviews covering adults DSM-related factors and their relationships. We will consider both qualitative and quantitative components of available literature from any setting and geographic location. Two reviewers will independently assess each study relevance and quality, and extract data from included reviews. Quantitative and qualitative findings will be summarized separately, and labeled according to their type (barrier/facilitator) or direction of association (+/-), classification (e.g., demographic, social etc.), and frequency of occurrence or strength of association. A final discussion will provide a critical comparison of results.

Relevance of the study

Taking a more comprehensive look at factors influencing DSM will contribute to our understanding of the patients' specificities, needs in the process of DSM, and will assist in targeting interventions to support DSM in adults with diabetes.

Living and aging away from the world, preservation strategies of the monastic orders.

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With support from SNSF,
Division I.



SWISS NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

This research project focuses on female and male religious catholic orders in French-speaking Switzerland and in Bourgogne/Franche-Comté. The members of these religious orders define themselves first and foremost by their traditional historical missions: prayer, work and hospitality. This is because, unlike the apostolic congregations, they have never had to hold positions in teaching, care or education and then leave these functions. Aging seems so to be a temporary impediment part of an ancient history rather than belonging to a primary collective identity. However, the aging of members of certain communities is a well-established fact. The ways they adapt (to this fact) diverge depending on whether – they are monks or nuns – they follow a certain obedience – they are in possession of some capital – or on the porous or sealed nature of the enclosure – be it real, symbolic or virtual.

Nowadays, the specificity of these religious orders attract women and men, seeking self-sustaining community life, rigorous spirituality, form of withdrawal from the world, etc. Although the community ideal is based on stability – each wants to be able to live and die among their own – getting older may lead to changes in these expectations. What strategies do the religious orders adopt facing the aging of their members? Are they making internal changes or constrained alliances with the outside world? Which situations in everyday life are everlasting and which are transitory? This project, which will run for 4 years, aims to answer the above questions.

The research will be conducted with an ethnographic approach, the researchers immersing themselves in the communities. Interviews, analyses of documents (archives, rules, conventions, etc.) and photographs will complete our in situ observations.

Elderly persons facing poly-medication : a socio-anthropological approach of their medicine uses and relationship to the provider.

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SWISS NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

Nowadays a majority of persons aged 65 and over suffer from at least three chronic conditions simultaneously and take numerous medicines over the long term. This phenomenon of polypathology and polymedication in elderly persons is more and more preoccupying because of :

1. Iatrogeny, i.e. drug interactions which can be harmful.
2. Inobservance, i.e. medication - in this case complex to manage by patients - is not taken as prescribed, can limit its effects and be noxious.

The population concerned by polymedication is seldom studied since co-morbidities are an exclusion criterion in clinical trials.

The aim of this study is to identify the factors influencing complex medication intake by focusing on the points of view of 60 elderly polymedicated persons, through interviews and filmed observations of medicine places of storage at home. With a socio-anthropological perspective, the medicine is here considered as an object with pharmacological efficacy, as well as an object invested with meaning by those who prescribe, deliver or receive it. Elderly persons will be invited to express their views on their medication, show us how they manage and take it daily, and how they interact with those assisting them. In particular, polymedication checks, and its influence on ways of consuming medicines and more or less respecting medical prescriptions, will be observed. Finally, a pharmacological and pharmaceutical analysis will allow to identify potential problems of iatrogeny, duplication and overdose.

Thoroughly understanding determinants of medicine consumption in situations of old age and chronicity will allow professional caregivers to integrate aspects of symbolic uses of medicines influencing care, as well as to better grasp the needs of those who take a complex medication over time. In turn, it should allow to limit the iatrogeny and inobservance induced by elderly persons' polymedication.

Pedagogising elder care.
Sociology of continuous
training as means to humanize
care homes.

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With support from SNSF,
Division I.



Medicalised care homes are often talked about with criticism, and demands for their improvement have been constant. A re-professionalisation of elder care workers through continuous training has imposed itself through a political and social consensus as one of the means to ensure such improvements.

Training institutes that provide training courses, and therefore partly implement this reform, insert themselves in interactions between residents, employees and managers with the goal to improve the lives of the elderly. This model of a dual reform of both care homes and of professional practices brings on a change in social relations and is structured by specific knowledge circulations. Knowledge exchanges take place in a field, that of ageing, where soft skills and know-how with and about the elderly are at stake.

The present sociological research will study this area in the French-speaking part of Switzerland and the reconfigurations brought on by continuous training. The study of both the production and reception of training programs offered by two different institutes in care homes will shed light on the cultural challenges faced by the ageing of the population, where research has ordinarily aimed the sanitary and economical effects of the phenomenon.

We will study to that end:

1. On a micro level, the reconfigurations of practices and social interactions among caregivers and residents and, secondly, the innovation work and the effects of management through skills in situations observed and thirdly in grey literature.
2. On an intermediate level (meso), the elaboration of knowledge, their process of validation and legitimization, of reproduction and distribution will be studied.
3. On a macro level, attention will be brought to institutional changes and the normalisation work that will come from these changes.

These three levels of analysis will allow us to jointly seize the evolution of training today in the field of ageing in institutions, as well as more general social reforms that this evolution stems from and participates in.

Completed research

Murielle Pott

In collaboration with
Stefano Cavalli (SUPSI)
Laetitia Stauffer (HESAV)
Sarah Lou Beltrami (SUPSI)
End 2018

Adhering to a right-to-die movement:
analyzing a life course transition and an
end-of-life anticipation in members aged
65 and older.

Annick Anchisi

In collaboration with
Laurent Amiotte Suchet (UNIL)
End 2017

« The price of custom », religious commu-
nities, old age and evolving practices in
care provision.

Rose-Anna Foley

In collaboration with
Annick Anchisi (HESAV)
Sandro Anchisi (Hôpital du Valais Sion)
Claire Ansermet (HESAV)
End 2015

Representations of medicines and thera-
peutical transitions in palliative treatment of
cancer: stages perceived by patients aged 70
and over in the illness trajectory.

Cédric Mabire

In collaboration with
Andrew Dwyer (CHUV)
End 2015

A systematic review on the effectiveness of
nursing discharge planning interventions on
health-related outcomes in elderly inpatients
discharged home.

Completed PhD research

Corinne Schaub

Director of thesis
Prof. Diane Morin
Faculty of Biology and Medicine, University
of Lausanne

Co-Director of thesis
Prof. Armin von Gunten
Faculty of Biology and Medicine, University
of Lausanne

Dr. Julius Popp
Faculty of Biology and Medicine, University
of Lausanne

End 2016

The effect of hand massage on stress and agitation in patients with dementia and on stress and mood of their nurses.

All research can be found on the website of HESAV

<http://recherche.hesav.ch>



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