

SUMMARY

GERMAN-SWEDISH SEMINAR

NATIONAL PLANNING OF ELDERLY CARE & QUALITY OF LIFE WITH DEMENTIA

FELLESHUSET, NORDIC EMBASSIES IN BERLIN SEPTEMBER 10, 2014

Representatives from the German and Swedish elderly care sector participated in a seminar on the topic “National Planning of Elderly Care & Quality of Life with Dementia” on September 10th at the Nordic Embassies in Berlin.

The main outcome of the discussions may be summarized as follows:

- Similar challenges within elderly care may provide a good basis for exchange – main differences are found within organizational structures and financing
- Elderly care moves towards more flexible solutions, where formal care can complement informal care and with a mixture of public and private actors
- Well-trained and educated staff is fundamental and in many ways the key towards ensuring enhanced quality of life for the patients and to support the relatives of the patient
- Technology can improve independence as well as safety for people living with dementia and their care takers regardless of where they are cared for
- Raising awareness about dementia in society and in the care sector is important for future improvements

Germany and Sweden are both facing challenges with an aging population. In both countries, people live longer and healthier lives and the increasing share of an elderly population put pressure on organization and quality of elderly care. In order to address the topic and create a platform for business dialogues and information exchange, a full day's seminar was organized at the Nordic Embassies in Berlin. The seminar was a collaboration between one of Germany's largest care providers, AWO, the Swedish Embassy and Business Sweden.

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Introduction and opening

The seminar was opened by the Swedish Minister Counsellor to Germany, Staffan Hemrån, who emphasised the importance of a continued dialogue and exchange of ideas in the field of elderly care. He concluded that the seminar provides a platform for more concrete discussions of solutions, learning and sharing best practices between the two countries.

Following, Anna Nordström, Swedish Trade Commissioner and Area Manager for Germany at Business Sweden, stressed the importance of sharing innovations and ideas to better tackle common challenges within the elderly care sector. The positive outcome of a Swedish-German dialog was also highlighted in the welcome note held by Birgitte Döcker, Member of the Board of AWO.

Challenges, solutions and responsibilities for planning elderly care

Marianne Olsson acted as a moderator for the seminar and introduced the guests to the topic of the first session of the seminar; "Challenges, solutions and responsibilities for planning elderly care".

Eva Nilsson-Bågenholm, National Coordinator for Elderly Care from the Swedish Ministry of Health and Social Affairs introduced elderly care in Sweden by telling how in Sweden, elderly care is the responsibility of districts, but delivered by the municipalities and coordinated between national, district and municipal level. The main challenge for Sweden is taking good care of the most fragile elderly. As a solution, Eva Nilsson-Bågenholm proposed increased home care and person-centred care. Integrating healthcare, elderly care and social care and implementing the use of evidence based medical and social care was proposed. In addition, increasing competences through education and recruitment to the elderly care and health care sector was advocated as important means to improve quality of elderly care and creating a more person-centred care.

Elderly care in Germany was introduced by Karl-Josef Laumann, Secretary of State and Federal Government Commissioner for Patient Matters and Assignee for Long-term Care, German Federal Ministry of Health. Karl-Josef Laumann explained that since 1995, federal regulated nursing care insurances provide the financial basis for elderly care, which are connected to the overall health insurance of the individual, while provision of care is the responsibility of municipalities but coordinated with insurance companies on a local level. German elderly care faces many challenges as it includes large regional difference in services and quality and the need to complement the elderly care with day care. The government has decided to implement a reform to improve quality of elderly care by opening up for more competition in care provision. The State Secretary emphasized that competition is good to improve the functioning and quality of elderly care in Germany.

Quality of Life with Dementia

European trends in elderly care and dementia was introduced by Marianne Olsson. The overall trend in Europe is moving towards more formal elderly care. Marianne Olsson pointed out that Sweden and Germany historically have different systems, where elderly care in Sweden typically is highly formal care, while Germany relies on informal care. Both countries are moving towards more flexible solutions, where formal care can complement informal care and with a mixture of public and private actors.

Elderly care for people with immigration background is a topic of increasing importance, and was introduced by Elena Maevskaya from the Dementia Service Center for people with immigration background, NRW, AWO. Elena Maevskaya stressed that Germany amongst other countries needs to find solutions to take care of the elderly immigrants with dementia. Dementia can cause a person to lose languages learned in later

stages of life, but also memories from migrating to Germany, which is why special assistance and support is important. Elena Maevskeya also underlined that sharing and exchanging information in this field is key to improve quality of elderly care for everyone.

Dementia and the quality of elderly care was also the main theme in the presentation by Wilhelmina Hoffmann, Managing Director Silviahemmet and Swedish Dementia Centre. Wilhelmina Hoffman explained that Silviahemmet is an educational unit for dementia in Sweden with the objective to spread the awareness of dementia in society. Likewise, Wilhelmina Hoffmann emphasised the need to share and spread knowledge about dementia and that solutions and improvements within care can be reached by educating doctors, nurses and caretakers.

Dianne Gove from Alzheimer Europe presented national guidelines on how to improve the incontinence care of people living at home with dementia that were developed based on a study conducted together with SCA. Guidelines can be important tools for professional staff within the care sector and may help in detecting early signs of dementia, giving guiding tools of how to assess the individual and how to organize management.

As final speaker, Gordon Garz, Head of Department for Emergency Calls at Johanniter-Unfall-Hilfe e.V. presented technical solutions that can increase security in nursing homes and in home based care based on pilot project conducted together with NEAT. Gordon Garz presented examples of how technology can help both to improve the independence and safety for people living with dementia in their homes, but also how it can be used as a tool for staff within elderly care.

Workshop “Home Based Care”

The workshop on home based care was moderated by Marianne Olsson and Helga Rohra, President of the EU –Working Group of People with dementia, Alzheimer Europe gave an introductory speech.

Helga Rohra, who was diagnosed with dementia 7 years ago, stated that people with dementia are the only experts on the illness, which is why it is important to include the actual patients in the development of elderly care. On the topic of increasing quality of life through home based care, four points were central throughout the discussion; spread of knowledge throughout the society, education and training of personnel in the care sector, increasing independence and autonomy of people with dementia and the inclusion of the actual ill in policy discussions.

There was a general agreement that increasing knowledge about dementia is the main challenge. Also, stigma is a crucial problem on the topic of dementia which is why future work in increasing awareness and spreading information about dementia is important. Knowledge about dementia is vital to detect the illness in its early stages. It was also discussed how patients, family members and the care sector must work together in order to achieve well-functioning and high quality home based care.

Lack of education and training of staff was the second important point discussed during the seminar. Yet again, lack of training and knowledge was pointed out as a major problem on the topic of dementia. There was a general agreement that education of staff both within the care sector but also in overall service sector is an important means to increase autonomy and independence of people living with dementia. Examples of best practices were how special training for the police or within various service sectors can improve treatment of people with dementia in everyday life situations.

A third point of discussion was the importance of support to family and those supporting people with dementia as well as the inclusion of both family and the person diagnosed with dementia in the decisions of care options. In many cases the family wishes to be involved and take large responsibility of their family

members. During the seminar, the importance of flexible solutions where home based family care can be complemented with formal care was discussed. An additional point stressed during the discussion was the importance of including and supporting families living with dementia by providing information and consultation in order to find individualised solutions.

Workshop "Quality of life with dementia at nursing homes"

The workshop regarding care at nursing homes was moderated by Benjamin Eberle, AWO Begegnungszentrum, with an introductory speech by Michael Harnischmacher, Vice General Manager and Bettina Vootz, Head of Department Inpatient Care/Senior Centers at the AWOcura Duisburg.

Michael Harnischmacher and Bettina Vootz presented their organization, which amongst others, consists of several senior centers and partial inpatient care facilities in the region of Duisburg. Michael Harnischmacher estimated that roughly 60 % of the elderly state dementia as the reason to why they choose to move in to AWOcura's facilities. In order to enhance the quality of life for elderly living with dementia, AWOcura focuses on creating an atmosphere with deep appreciation, confidence and participation for the elderly. This can only be achieved with a developed organisational structure including a well-trained staff and profound understanding of dementia and how it affects the elderly.

There was a general agreement that well-trained staff is fundamental and in many ways the key towards ensuring enhanced quality of life. During the discussion it became clear that the whole process and management of treating and working with elderly with dementia must make use of new methodology as well as technology. Technology plays a crucial role in supporting the staff in day-to-day activities and may also motivate and benefit the elderly in certain areas. The staff and the social aspect must, however, never be neglected and technology should be viewed as a tool and complement for human interaction, not as a supplement. It should also be fitted to suit the specific needs of the individual elderly depending on his or her requirements and personal background. Especially in Germany, the necessity of having a positive cost/benefit-analysis of the technological products is essential.

In general, in order to work towards and manage the needs of the elderly living with dementia, public awareness has to be raised and a broader cooperation between e.g. senior centers (staff), relatives and general public must be promoted.

Study visits to AWO day-care Sommergarten and the care support center Berlin-Mitte

The day concluded with study visits to an elderly day-care facility and a care support center ("Pflegestützpunkt") which provided the participants with a clear and practical picture of how Berlin-Mitte actively works with and supports the elderly and their relatives in the community.

With a high number of attendees as well as general interest for further information, the Swedish Embassy, AWO and Business Sweden thank you for your participation and will evaluate suitable next steps.

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