



ESPN – Flash report

2014/4

General practitioners attached to elderly care institutions

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Theme(s):	<i>Long-term care and healthcare</i>
Title:	General practitioners attached to elderly care institutions
Category:	<i>Evaluation results</i>
Abstract:	To improve the quality of health care for elderly in residential care institutions, the project consists of attaching general practitioners to these institutions. An evaluation shows that this reduces admissions into hospitals and elderly's use of medicine and increases the satisfaction of all actors involved.
Description:	<p>When an elderly person moves from own home to a residential care institution he/she is assigned a new general practitioner affiliated to the institution. This doctor starts by assessing the health state and medical treatment of the elderly. When the elderly becomes ill the residential care institution contacts the doctor who then decides on admission to hospital, if felt needed.</p> <p>The evaluation finds that the new scheme reduces admissions into hospitals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 28% reduction of preventive admissions • 27% reduction of re-admissions • 14% reduction of short term admissions. <p>The new scheme also results in a:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reduction of medicine consumption • greater user satisfaction of elderly • better collaboration between doctors and care workers • greater work satisfaction of doctors and care workers • greater satisfaction of relatives. <p>If implemented nation-wide, the scheme is estimated to save 223 million DKK annually (1 euro is 7,45 DKK and the budget for care of elderly and handicapped was 38,132 million DKK in 2013, by far largest single item on municipal budgets (Statistics Denmark)).</p>
Outlook & Commentary:	<p>The Government has included the idea of having a doctor permanently attached to residential care institutions in its proposal for a reform of health policy called "The Sooner, the Better: Earlier diagnosis, better treatment and more good years of life for all" from August 2014.</p> <p>Budget 2014 negotiations started in September and usually end in November-December. Most likely, the proposal will receive broad political support. An election called for by the Prime Minister in the Autumn 2014 may postpone the adoption of the measure to all residential care. Because of its broad success and positive impact on the economy, the implementation of the measure is only a question of time before it gets rolled out to the whole long-term</p>

	and health care sectors.
Further reading:	<p>The Ministry of Children, Gender Equality, Integration and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Health initiated the pilot project "Permanently attached doctors to elderly care".</p> <p>The project aimed to investigate if closer cooperation between doctors and elderly care workers could improve the quality of elderly care and healthcare. Seven elderly care institutions were allocated general practitioners in 2012-2014. The evaluation of the project combines qualitative and quantitative methods using individual interviews and focus groups as well as survey and register data. The study compares the situation of residents in the seven elderly care institutions with that of residents in other elderly care institutions controlling for observable and non-observable institutional characteristics. Outcomes are preventive admissions, re-admissions and short term admissions. The study also assesses the impact of permanently attached doctors on other outcomes like the use of medicine, collaboration, and user satisfaction. Finally the project sets out the effects of implementing the scheme nationally for residents above 65 years of age living in institutional care institutions that have more than twenty residents. These effects include economic measures and satisfaction of elderly, relatives, care workers and doctors on life and work. A separate evaluation on the implementation of the project was made in 2013.</p> <p>Cecilie Dohmann Weatherall, Heidi Hesselberg Lauritzen, Anne Toft Hansen, Tina Termansen (2014) <i>Evaluering af "Fast tilknyttede læger på plejecentre"</i>. Et pilotprojekt. Evaluation report. Copenhagen: SFI – The Danish National Institute for Social Research.</p> <p>Cecilie Dohmann Weatherall, Heidi Hesselberg Lauritzen, Tina Termansen (2013) Implementering af "fast tilknyttede læger på plejecentre", Notat. Copenhagen: SFI – The Danish National Institute for Social Research.</p> <p>The evaluation report (Danish language) can be downloaded free at www.sfi.dk.</p> <p>Government health policy reform proposal "The Sooner, the Better" in Danish language at http://www.stm.dk/multimedia/Sundhedsudspil_Jo_f_r_-_jo_bedre.pdf.</p>
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