Dementia Care in Denmark

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Plan of this Lecture

2. Effectiveness of Social Support throughout the Course of Dementia
3. Family-centered Approach
5. The Danish Welfare System.
Gerda Hansen successfully masters Dementia

Diagnosis: Alzheimer’s 2002

- Former occupation: Working with handicapped children.
- Living alone in a small house in the countryside
- Gerda has one daughter
- Gerda keeps active and well informed about the disease
After the dementia diagnosis...

- Joined a high school course
- Had visits from the dementia coordinator
- Her daughter was employed as her personal assistant
- Joined a brain training course
- Goes for trips almost everyday
Everyday life of Gerda now

- Is an active participant in a dementia café, helping others, giving out information

Her daughter moved to Sweden. So: New personal assistant: 2 hours a week + visits by dementia coordinator

- Technical aids: a voice-recorder reminding her about appointments

- Applies for a GPS to enable her to go on trips alone

- Writing poems and life history on a computer
In the future Gerda ..

- may need daily homecare visits.
- may want to eat a daily meal at the local Elderly Center
- may join a special Day Centre for persons with dementia, 1-5 days a week
- may want a volunteer contact friend for walking and talking.
- May need to move into a group-home or a special care unit
The nature is my best friend..
Facts from Denmark

- 5,5 mio. inhabitants
- 853,000 persons +65 year (1.1.2008)
- 183,000 receive home help services
- 47,000 live in nursing home/care institutions
- 40,000 live in special dwellings for the elderly
- 70,000 staff working with care of the elderly
- 80,000 citizens suffer from dementia
Denmark

- Denmark is divided into 5 regions with in all 98 municipalities
- Denmark has a tax-based (free) welfare-system.
- Schools, Education, Social- and Healthcare and Help at home are free.
- Citizens +65 years receive a pension from the state.
Model 1983: Effect of social support
Experiences from Sweden and Denmark:

More and more people stay in their own homes with dementia: People are diagnosed earlier and stay longer at home because of better support.

Various support throughout the course of the illness enables families to cope better with their condition.

The coordinated efforts with a wide range of special services may be gradually increased.
Better quality of life – yet cheaper!

- *The Faaborg Dementia Project*: Offering special services will ensure persons with dementia and their families better quality of life, calmer living and a longer stay in the customary environment.
- Simultaneously, costs are reduced compared to institutionalization.
Having dementia - What must I do?

- A handbook contains advice about how to cope with everyday life:
- Meeting others.
- Being active and remain fit, eating and drinking with moderation may prevent depressions.
- Being open to families and talk about future wishes
- www.demensramt.dk
Project "Giv tid", Copenhagen

- Specially trained homecare teams support flexibly with the aim of keeping people with dementia active and socially trained and also to give their families some relief.
Technical Help and Dementia

- Technical devices - such as GPS, Automatic Calendar, Automatic Light, Movement Sensors etc. may support functional ability, active living and may add a feeling of support and safety.

- In a report (2008) from the Nordic countries, 20 case-stories report about the use of technical devices in the daily living.

Supporting families

- Teaching about dementia.
- Cooperation with dementia staff.
- Groups work with families.
- Marte Meo (NL)
- http://www.demensfrekvens.dk/presse.php
Family Approach

- Maintaining skills through home-based occupational therapy
- Learning to work together in the family with well known activities.
- Training family members in giving verbal and physical guidance
- Creating supportive environments

Josephsson 1994, Graff MJL et al. 2006
Physical, Social and Cognitive Fitness

- Social activity in the early stages of the disease may delay losses of functional ability
  - *Villemoes Soerensen L 2007*
- Physical and mental activities may also maintain cognitive skills
  - *Kirk H 2004*
CST - Cognitive Stimulation Therapy

- CST sessions: Group name, theme song, warm-up activities, thematical sessions, RO-board, word association, multi-sensory stimulation, flexible activities, reminiscense, strengthening relationships...

- 14 CST sessions with stimulation of senses and cognitive abilities

- CST runs for 7 weeks ( 2x45 minute session per week)
Results of RCT
(Spector et al. British J Psych 2003)

- 201 participants, 23 centres (18 residential care homes, 5 day centres)
- Groups (approx. 5 people) run by a researcher and a member of staff
- Blind assessment made prior to and week following CST
- Significant improvement in Cognition and QoL. Differences between centres.
DK: Stimulation in local group settings

- Local stimulation groups run by activity workers and home care staff
- Mental exercises: Play, reading, quizz, puzzles, discussion, reminiscing, multi-sensory stimulation
A Qualitative Evaluation:

- The Danish project with local stimulation groups:
  - Increase the attention on everyday life of the group members
  - Increase their social skills
  - Offer relief to the family
  - Delay admission to institution
  - Make eventual transfer to institutions less stressing.
Therapeutic gardening

- Nature stimulates the senses, wakes up memories, invites to activity and to discussions and to doing things together - or to calm down.
- In a forest house - a daycare group felt freer than in the nursing home environment
- Swane 2004, Lene Welén-Andersson L, Alnarp, Sweden
"Green welfare work"
Danish welfare - system

Key principles since 1983:
- Continuity
- Use of Own Resources
- Self Determination

Leads to the following principles of work:
- Supporting self-support
- At home as long as possible.
Accepting Help

- Majority of old people live at home .. But – of course: The older the more alone.
- Most old people highly value:
  - Being able to manage everyday life without public help.
  - To be in control and decide themselves how to live.
Denmark to-day:

- A study this September among 200 Danish Dementia Coordinators shows their most popular wishes:
  - More service for people living at home.
  - More day-centers and stimulation therapy.
  - More service for the relief of the families.
  - Special units for persons with FTD.