

Integrated care for dementia – need for new ways in training of health care professionals

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Background

Dementia is a key public health challenge in Europe due to the aging population. Dementia is not only demanding for people living with dementia and their relatives but also for the society (e.g. due to the need for long term care)

In 2014 an implementation plan for integrated care of people with dementia was developed for the city of Vienna. The main aim was to facilitate living at home as long as possible and an earlier detection of the disease as well as an earlier onset of an adequate treatment process than today using the given resources by the social- and health care system.

Integrated care of people with dementia faces many obstacles:

- Late diagnosis due to missing information on dementia
- Fear of the associated stigma and social exclusion
- Bringing together all involved occupational groups like health care professionals and social system representatives to provide a continuous health care

Objectives

Therefore the following four aspects are the main pillars of the implementation plan:

1. Raising public awareness for dementia
2. Empowerment of people living with dementia and their relatives as well as informal care givers
3. Provision of integrated care within an established network
4. The training of health care professionals, which is described in more detailed in the following sections

Training Concept

An interdisciplinary training concept was developed together with various stakeholders along the care pathway considering existing concepts for training in Germany and Austria. The training was designed to provide medical doctors with the capability to recognise the first signs of dementia to facilitate an early diagnosis and to train them on the relevant existing medical guidelines. Furthermore, caregivers are sensitized to dementia and equipped with skills and knowledge in the daily care. Beyond that, these skills, working in an interdisciplinary setting and within the network are parts of the training for all health care professionals.

Results

The result is a training concept consisting of three comprehensive modules (initial basic training, quality circles and network meetings).

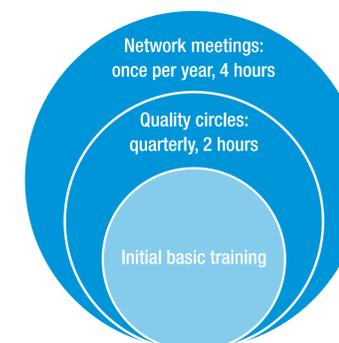


Figure 1: Parts of the training

Separate initial basic trainings are organized for the different health care profession groups because qualification and requirements vary considerably among the different groups. However, basic training of all groups will follow the same four modules.

Module	Contents
Module 1	disease pattern of dementia
Module 2	handling of people with dementia
Module 3	support offered by health care and social system
Module 4	working within the network

Table 1

Quality circles and network meetings are following an interdisciplinary approach. These two training parts will provide the participants with hands-on experience in teamwork.

Conclusion

- Well trained health care professionals are essential to early diagnosis of dementia.
- Cooperation between different health care professionals needs an interdisciplinary training approach.

Take Home Messages

- An interdisciplinary training approach is essential because many different professions are concerned with care for people suffering from dementia.
- Basis training is given separately accounting for different needs of the various professions.