Poster – #EIE2021

Bridging the research-to-practice gap in home care: using older adults' experiences with social network change and health decline to develop an intervention in co-creation with home care stakeholders

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Research aim

When aging in place, social networks are sources of support and contribute to wellbeing of older adults. As social networks change, especially when accompanied by health decline, older adults' sources of support change and their wellbeing is challenged. Previous studies predominantly use quantitative measures to examine how older adults' social networks change. Therefore, we explored social network change qualitatively, examining the impact of social network change on older adults' lives and how older adults experience social network change and health decline. Additionally, we perceive that home care nurses could benefit from the implementation of our results in their practice, although in literature numerous studies mention a 'research-to-practice gap' in healthcare. Therefore, we designed a study to develop an intervention for home care nurses, using previously mentioned results and making an extra effort to bridge the research-to-practice gap.

Methods

In four rounds, we follow the sequential steps of Intervention Mapping (IM) to develop an intervention for home care nurses to reduce the impact of social network change on older adults who are aging in place. Round 1 is concerned with creating a logic model of the problem and of the change that is intended. Round 1 will be based on results of our previous studies on experiences of older adults and input of home care nurses. Round 2 is concerned with choosing change methods and applications. Round 1 and 2 will be executed by a project group of home care nurses, implementation specialists and a researcher. In round 3 we will hold three co-creation sessions with home care nurses to develop the intervention materials. Round 4 contains the making of an implementation and evaluation plan. After finishing every round, a group of experts (home care teams, managers and health insurance buyers) will be consulted for feedback on the intermediate results and to reach consensus on the definitive result.

Key findings

An intervention that can be used by home care nurses to reduce the impact of social network change in older adults who are aging in place. Our previous results revealed high-impact experiences of social network change and consecutive stages of social network dynamics. Also, our previous results stated that the impact of social network change and health decline can vary majorly between a rather homogenous group of older adults with similar experiences of social network change and/or health decline. We expect to develop an intervention that will help home care nurses to reduce impact of social network change in older adults. Moreover, we expect to bridge the gap between science and practice and benefit older adults and home care nurses.

Discussion

Examining experiences of the ones at stake (i.e. older adults who are aging in place) provides a rich insight in their lives and valuable scientific results. However, it takes an additional effort to connect with the practitioners who can benefit from these results and, together, develop a way to use the results. What are suggestions from the audience to facilitate or benefit implementation of the proposed intervention? What are perceived barriers for implementation of the proposed intervention, according to the audience?