Implementation of an inter-professional training course „Evidence-based care for people with dementia“ (KOMPIDEM-1)

Denise Wilfling¹, Kristina Jäke², Jost Steinhäuser³, Katrin Balzer⁴

¹ MSc Advanced Nursing Practice, Nursing Research Unit, Institute of Social Medicine and Epidemiology, University of Lübeck and Institute of Family Medicine, University Hospital Schleswig-Holstein, Campus Lübeck, Germany

² Medical Doctor, Institute of Family Medicine, University Hospital Schleswig-Holstein, Campus Lübeck, Germany

³ Professor of Family Medicine, Institute of Family Medicine, University Hospital Schleswig-Holstein, Campus Lübeck, Germany

⁴ Prof. Dr. rer. cur. Katrin Balzer, Nursing Research Unit, Institute of Social Medicine and Epidemiology, University of Lübeck

Background

The care for and treatment of people with dementia entails substantial challenges for all persons involved, not just because of the affected persons’ cognitive decline, but also because of the non-cognitive or neuropsychiatric symptoms which arise over the course of the illness such as restlessness, aggression and depression. Empirical findings indicate that medical and nursing care for those affected by neuropsychiatric symptoms is frequently not delivered in accordance with current evidence-based recommendations.¹² Besides deficits in professionals’ knowledge and competencies, problems related to the cooperation between physicians and nurses have found to be of importance.¹³ This stands in distinct contrast to the much emphasized necessity of continuous, effective collaboration between these two professions in the care for people with dementia. In the initially realized project KOMPIDEM (Better COMpetencies for the interprofessional and Individually appropriate care for people with DEMentia) an interprofessional undergraduate training course on dementia care for medical and nursing students was developed and piloted.⁴ Results showed that the training course has the potential to enhance medical and nursing students’ confidence in their competencies to deliver joint evidence-based care for people with dementia.

Objective

Objective of this second funding period is enhancing the training course in content, methods and didactic in order to ensure the course’s long-term acceptance, feasibility and effectiveness.

Methods

The project encloses 5 working packages which are partially based on each other or interlocked by parallel running:

(1) Analysis and evidence-based enhancements: This working package comprises all necessary empirical and developing work to implement the existing training course, e.g. analysis of competence
models for nursing and medical education in dementia care as well as systematic literature search for effective communication training programs in dementia care. Another focus is the development of a local interprofessional skills training for undergraduate students in nursing and medicine in order to train communication with people with dementia.

(2) **Offering the training course:** Within the project period the training course will be offered for medical and nursing students from the University of Lübeck and non-academic nursing trainees in the third year from the Nursing Academy Lübeck in winter terms 2016/2017 and 2017/2018 as well as summer term 2017.

(3) **Evaluation:** Every passed training course will be evaluated by a pre-post-design. The survey aims at evaluating the course’s quality and other relevant process features as well as recording potential changes in students’ knowledge and skills.

(4) **Dissemination:** All activities within the project and the achieved results shall be spread broadly. This should support the development of necessary infrastructural conditions for project realization.

(5) **Project coordination:** The continuous project coordination plays a key role by organizing, controlling and monitoring the execution of the individual working packages. It also encloses ensuring a continuous information flow between all project partners, including the responsible persons for training coordination and teaching within the course.

**Results**

Since its orientation in content and its interprofessional character, the training course addresses two central barriers in dementia care: the uncertainties in knowledge and skills of physicians and nurses concerning adequate strategies in contact with cognitive and non-cognitive (neuropsychiatric) changes in people with dementia,\textsuperscript{5,6,7} and the empirical documented problems related to the cooperation between physicians and nurses in the care for people with dementia.\textsuperscript{3,8,9}

**Preliminary Conclusion**

As a result of undergraduate interprofessional learning at an early stage and the focus on coping strategies for challenging situations in dementia care, the regularly conducted training course can provide evidence-based competencies in dementia care for future nurses and physicians. A close constructive interprofessional cooperation informed by mutual appraisal will be promoted.

**References**


4 Balzer K et al. Improving competencies in evidence-based dementia care: Results from a pilot study on a novel inter-professional training course (the KOMPIDEM project). German Medical Science 2015; 33(2)


