Symposium: Demographics and services

Aging and quality of life: Challenges and opportunities under conditions of ID
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Aim: Promoted by the UN-CRPD, there is significant effort being directed to raise the quality of life for people with disabilities. What about the elderly? Even with the same right to participate, they are confronted with double discrimination; living with a lifelong disability is mainly seen as a life full of restrictions, and ageing is discredited as a period of suffering and losing autonomy. The research project “LeQui” aims to show examples of best practice in supporting elderly people with an ID in Germany.

Method: The research project, based on interviews with consultants of welfare organizations and an analysis of empirical and conceptual literature, evaluated projects that supported areas of everyday life of elderly people with ID.

Results: The different steps of the study offer an overview of the challenges as well as the innovative ideas around support and the accompanying risks that need to be met in changing services for elderly people with ID.

Conclusions: Social services and health services have to prepare for a future with a growing number of elderly people and society has to ensure the quality of life for this growing number. Therefore, interdisciplinary and international perspectives have to be aligned.

The demographic change of the adult population with intellectual disabilities in Germany
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Aim: How will the demographic structure of people with intellectual disabilities in Germany change? Using the example of Westphalia-Lippe, a region with 8.3 million inhabitants, it is projected how the age structure will alter until the year 2040.

Method: The projection is primarily based on personal data of all recipients of services for disabled people from the regional funding authority (Landschaftsverband) and on educational statistics. Assumptions are founded on the current utilization of support services (status quo-scenario) and age-group specific mortality rates.

Results: The percentage of seniors among the adult population with ID will be increasing from 10% in 2010 to 31% in 2030. In 2030, every second client in residential institutions will be 60 years or older, and every third in supported living. The number of people is forecast who will need any kind of support during the day after retirement or who will be in need of care when they get older.

Conclusions: In cooperation with other social sectors (care for the elderly, health service system) and with the local authorities, service providers have to adjust to the age-related demands to ensure adults with ID a life-long perspective in supported living within the community.