

# Staff training as a tool to improve quality of elder care: a workshop

Gunilla Fahlström

Katrin Östman

Ann Kristine Jonsson

together with

Britt Mari Hellner

Elizabeth Åhsberg



Britt Mari Hellner



Elizabeth Åhsberg

# Agenda for the next 1½ hour

- Welcome!
- Issues we would like to discuss.
- A project in Swedish elder care.
- Findings from an ongoing map of literature about staff training and user effects in elder care.
- Discussion.

# Four issues for discussion

- From “happenings” to evolutionary process - is there any other way?
- Is training the one and only solution?
- Organisational/managerial active commitment, a necessity!
- Efforts for groups and individuals!



# Swedish elder care – a general welfare service

- for everyone regardless of income
  - 15 % of all 65 years +
  - 37 % of all 80 years +
- 56 % of total expenditures for social services
- 2.93 % of GNP
- Average cost per person and year
  - 408 400 SEK (65 800 USD) in nursing homes
  - 224 700 SEK (36 200 USD) for home care



# Objectives for national policy for the elderly

- be able to lead active lives and have influence on society and their own everyday lives
- be able to grow old in security and retain their independence
- be treated with respect
- have access to good health and social care services



# Responsibility for care

- Shared between state, county councils and municipalities
- the municipalities and county councils have a high level of autonomy
- two national legislations
  - The Health and Medical Services act
  - The Social Services Act



# State financed staff training

- Purpose – improve care quality
- The municipalities decided on educational models and areas of content
  - a great diversity, 1 771 separate projects
  - almost (all) 290 municipalities
- The projects had already started when IMS got the assignment to evaluate the effects



# Themes and methods of training

- **Major themes, eg**
  - Ethics, attitudes
  - Dementia
  - Record keeping
  - Rehabilitation
  - Nutrition
  - Medication
  - Prevention of falls
- **Major methods, eg**
  - Local education at work
  - Tutorial
  - Local specialists
  - Study circle
  - "Idealized design"
  - Mentors

# Examples of empirical studies

**Did training in fall prevention reduce  
the number of incidents?**

## **Method:**

Test of knowledge

- before training
- after 1 year

## **Outcome:**

Fall injuries treated in hospital

- municipalities with training
- municipalities without training

# Examples of empirical studies

- Did training in need assessment reduce discrepancies?

## Method

A vignette study  
municipalities with training  
municipalities without training

## Outcome

Need of assessments  
- not available

# Better staff knowledge and skills, better care of older persons?!

- In service training for staff in elder care and its effects for users according to scientific studies.

# Better staff knowledge and skills, better care of elder persons!?

- Gunilla Fahlström, PhD, social worker
- Britt Mari Hellner, PhD, psychologist

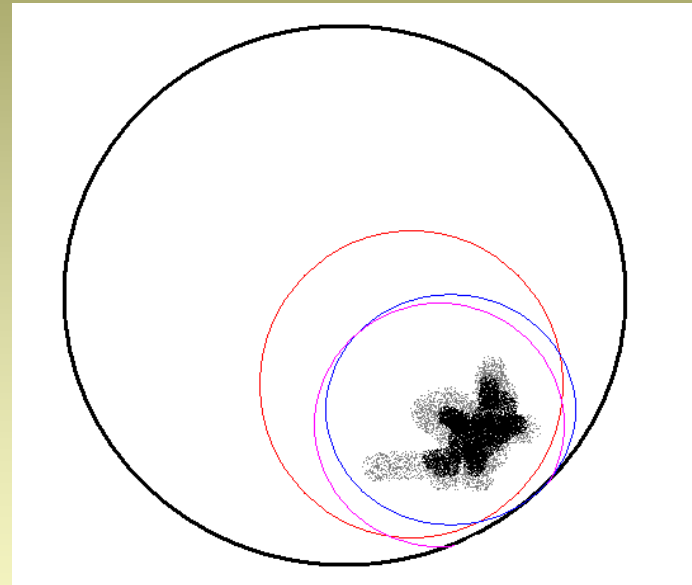
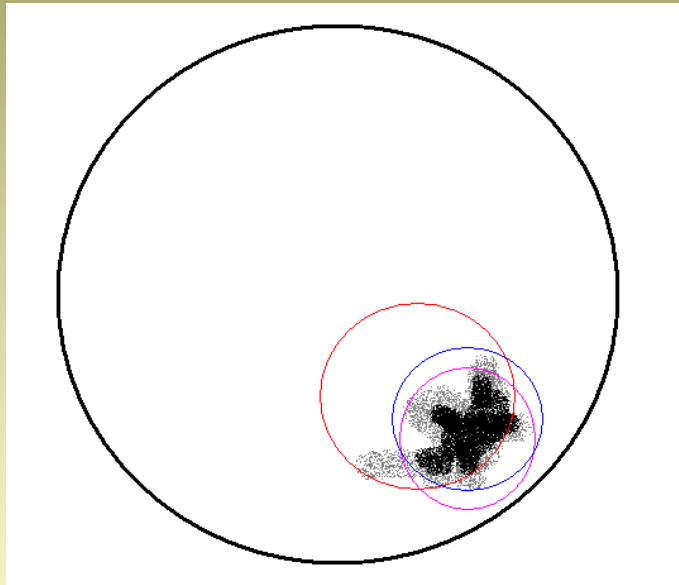
# Wanted: scientific studies where..

- staff education intervention and user outcome measurement is described.

# Method

- Searching databases with applied search strategies.
- Screening and classification of 6500 abstracts using Eppi-reviewer.
- 280, <5%, were “included on scope”.
- Classification of relevant studies.

# Different search strategies – ideal and real



# Mapping, a method that gives ..

- an overview of research activities and the knowledge situation
- a comprehensive basis for a systematic literature review.

# Observations (1)

- The issue is researched!
- In different parts of the world.
- The whole range of research designs.
- A range of models/methods for staff training.



# Observations (2)

- Skills, knowledge, attitudes.
- Different occupational groups in different settings.
- Different user groups (including next of kin).
- Different themes.


# Examples of success, set back/ no progress and no effect

- Integrity promoting care, Sweden (Bråne et al 1989) 

# Examples of success, set back/ no progress and no effect

- Integrity promoting care, Sweden (Bråne et al 1989) 
- Preventive home visits, Denmark (Vass et al 2005) 

# Examples of success, set back/ no progress and no effect

- Integrity promoting care, Sweden (Bråne et al 1989) 
- Preventive home visits, Denmark (Vass et al 2005) 
- Quality of care, Netherlands (Finnema 2001) 

# Examples of success, set back/ no progress and no effect

- Integrity promoting care, Sweden (Bråne et al 1989) 👍😊
- Preventive home visits, Denmark (Vass et al 2005) 👍😊
- Quality of care, Netherlands (Finnema 2001) 🤔
- Quality of life, USA (Rosen et al 2005) 😊

# Examples of success, set back/ no progress and no effect

- Integrity promoting care, Sweden (Bråne et al 1989) 
- Preventive home visits, Denmark (Vass et al 2005) 
- Quality of care, Netherlands (Finnema 2001) 
- Quality of life, USA (Rosen et al 2005) 
- Oral health, USA (Reed et al 2006) 

# It is possible to teach old dogs new tricks!



However ...

---

**ims.**

INSTITUTE FOR EVIDENCE-BASED  
SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE  
The National Board of Health and Welfare

# Reflections (1)

- Education/training is considered valuable, thus recommended, but often without empirical evidence.
- Differences in implementation process due to staff education level.
- No harm for users, but occasionally unclear effects.
- Why not even more studies “on scope”?

# Reflections (2)

- One issue at a time is focused in research, but in elder care practice there are many issues at a time!
- Outcome measurement is difficult.
- Unwillingness to measure effects? (Ellis et al 2000)
- The follow up perspective is short = long term effects are unknown.

# Multiple approach is needed!

- Importance
- Knowledge and skill
- Willingness
- Coherence/context
- Continuous
- Hands on
- Feed back
- Reinforcement
- Reward
- Individual & group

# Educational session for a group



# Individual feedback situation



Overall, staff training is necessary,  
often effective - but ...

Our sound advice to politicians is:

knowledge will last long, but not isolated, not performed  
in whatever manner and not always all the way!

# Four issues for discussion

- From “happenings” to evolutionary process - is there any other way?
- Is training the one and only solution?
- Organisational/managerial active commitment, a necessity!
- Efforts for groups and individuals!
- Anything else?