

ELDERLY PEOPLE'S REHABILITATION WELFARE CLINIC

– A Model for Preventive Rehabilitation

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 Kuntoutuksen edistämisyhdistys ry

**Ikäihmisten
kuntoutus-
neuvola
2000–2004**

Key words: rehabilitation welfare clinic, elderly people, elderly people with physical disabilities, gerontologic rehabilitation, prevention, functional ability, everyday activities

Introduction

The Association for Promoting Rehabilitation (Kuntoutuksen edistämisyhdistys ry) functions as a nationwide expert and co-operational organisation aiming to promote rehabilitation of elderly and elderly people with physical disabilities.

There is a need for health and social care to develop sustainable programmes for preventing the development of disability and thus lowering the need for medical care. The purpose of this national project has been to develop a rehabilitation model by promoting the Elderly people's Rehabilitation Welfare Clinic (RWC) services in five communities in Finland (Helsinki, Kajaani, Mikkeli, Pieksämäki Region, Tornio). The project has been funded by Raha-automaattiyhdistys (RAY).

Objectives

The objectives of the project were

- To improve elderly persons' management of everyday activities and maintain functional ability
- To improve services, which have an impact on the quality of life
- To investigate the need for rehabilitation services
- To give support to relatives, home-carers and professional helpers.

Contents

The preventative rehabilitation services contained

- Reception services and rehabilitation counselling
- Home visits to assess the overall circumstances of the elderly person and his or her family and rehabilitation services which they require
- Rehabilitation in groups
- Further education for professionals in this sector.

A central part of the activities has been provision of local information and the production of information material (service-guides, internet services). The RWC is part of the network, where public and private associations together plan, carry out and evaluate the rehabilitation services for elderly people.

Evaluation

The multi-evaluation process in the project has had several objectives: the model of the RWC and its adaptability to different kinds of communities; the positive outcomes of the rehabilitation interventions on functional ability (balance training, muscle strength training, physical exercise in water; team activities, groups for promoting mental health), the effectiveness of developing co-operation in the chain of services and the professional qualifications of the personnel working for the RWC.

Project outcomes

The main outcome was the development of the RWC model that can be used in different types of community and socio-economic environments.

The RWC has shown a great flexibility, as the communities have been able to implement the model to their specific needs with regard to the requirements of the elderly people.

The organisational position varies, but the most important factor for the effective functioning of the clinic was the commitment of the general social and health care system to preventative ideology, focusing on preventative rehabilitation, client-centred practice, negotiating a targeted approach, preventative resources, easy access and a positive image.

The importance of the network and the number of partners offering the services needed in the clinic have been the most significant factors of success. Due to the extensive nature of this project none of the communities have yet been able to install the clinic as a whole within its organisation. Since there is a need for this service in the social and health care system throughout the country, it is likely that this kind of easily approachable cost-effective rehabilitation clinic will be noticed widely.

