

TRANSITIONS IN LATER LIFE A STUDY OF HOME CARE RECEIVERS IN TICINO

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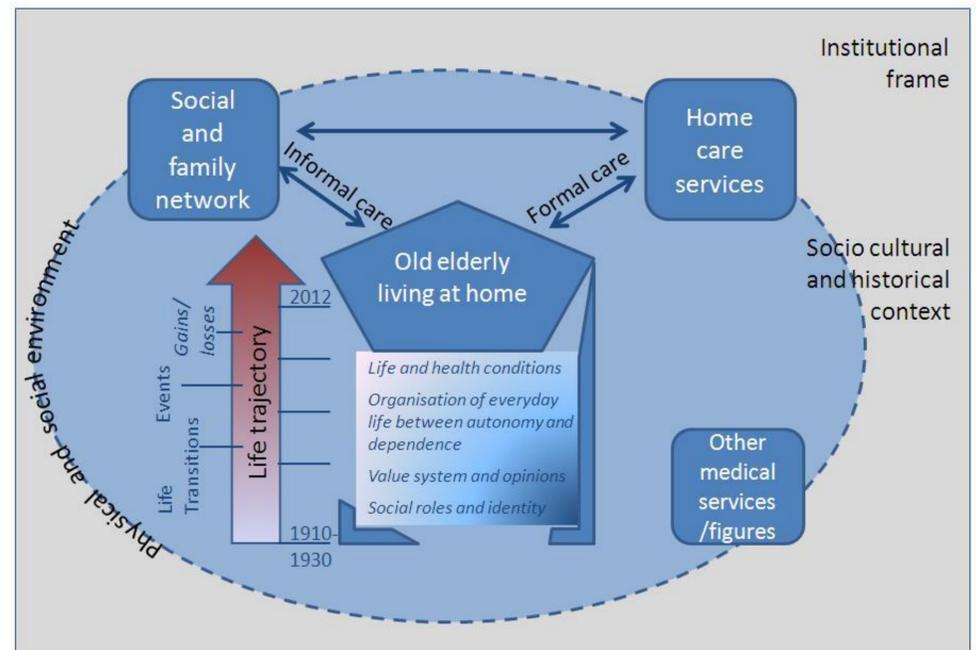
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1. BACKGROUND

With the ageing of the population in Western societies, help in daily life activities is increasingly needed by elderly living at home, especially by “old-old people” [1]. In connection with a policy in favor of the “keeping at home” [2], formal sources of support such as those provided by professional care services, have gained importance and often complement the traditional assistance offered by families [3].

While existing studies have focused more on informal care, especially from the caregivers perspective [4], this research will focus on the use of these emerging types of support, but starting from the care receiver’s point of view, in our case the elderly living at home.

Furthermore, we adopt a Life-course perspective [5] and assume that, like other “life transitions” typical of the old age (retirement, widowhood, institutionalization), the mobilization of a formal network of care marks a critical shift in the life of the elderly, asking him/her for significant efforts of adaptation.



Studying elderly home care in a sociological Life-course perspective

3.1 Quantitative part

Analysis of VLV questionnaires data of the very old elderly living at home in order to:

- develop an objective profile of people receiving formal care services;
- compare them with contemporaries not receiving formal care services.

Main aspects considered:

- place of living (nature and size of the home environment, household composition);
- economic situation;
- social and family network (size and composition, geographic proximity, nature and frequency of contacts, exchange of services);
- health (self-assessment of health status; existence of health problems, falls, hospitalizations);
- independence degree in performing daily life activities;
- opinions about the role of family and society in helping the elderly;
- formal home care (nature and frequency of services received).

3.2 Qualitative part

In-depth interviews with a small group of VLV participants (between 15 and 20) selected from our sample, in order to complete our quantitative data and understand experiences, representations and meanings of such a life transition for the elderly.

By considering all the related aspects (Life-course Perspective), the main object of interviews is to investigate the following aspects:

- circumstances and reasons that bring to mobilization of a given home care service;
- implications in daily life and in self-perception.

2. AIM OF THE PROJECT

Using a method combining quantitative and qualitative data analysis, our purpose is primarily to clarify how the use of formal care services takes place in the life trajectory of elderly and how, with all its implications, it is experienced and perceived by the directly concerned parties.

3. METHODS AND DATA

The research starts from data collected through the cross-sectional survey “Vivre-Leben-Vivere” (NCCR LIVES IP13) on life and health conditions of people aged 65 and over living in Switzerland ($n=3600$). We focus on one of the VLV investigated areas: the Italian speaking region Ticino.

The Ticino sample size consists of 720 people living either at home or in nursing homes, randomly selected by gender and age group. We will concentrate on over eighty years old people living at home ($n=240$) and in particular on the beneficiaries of formal care services.

The method aims to combine quantitative use of the VLV data with a more qualitative one, developed through in-depth interviews.

4. REFERENCES

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