

PrimA – Prevention in Old Age

A gerontological project at the University of Applied Sciences, Munich, Bavaria/Germany

We are happy to announce that the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research <http://www.bmbf.de/en/index.php> has granted the research project “PrimA – Prävention im Alter (Prevention in old age)” of our working group a three-year funding.

The foci of our working group “Interdisciplinary Gerontology” are

- Enhancing transfer between theory and practice
- Assuring the quality of existing services
- Qualifying for the future
- Developing tailor-made services
- Raising awareness towards ageing issues

The topic of the PrimA-project will be preventive services for older people. So far, diverse services usually reach older people in Germany very late, when their health, social and economic situation is on the verge of being precarious. We aim to establish a new implementation approach, especially in form of preventive counseling services, and to find a way to install this in Germany.

The main characteristics of the current preventive situation (in Germany) in older age are the following:

- Competences prevail well into old age
- Age-relevant risks are predictable
- Certain crises in older age are avoidable
- The quality of life can be increased throughout one’s whole life
- Preventive services for older people do not exist nationwide in Germany
- Relevant institutions lack resources

Since other European countries like the Netherlands or Finland are among the forerunners in preventive services for older people, foreign expertise would be very valuable for the PrimA-project.

Our cooperation with international and national partners consists of exchange of information on a "best-practice" basis, in form of personal or telephone interviews. For example, we are particularly interested in the preventive house visits in the Netherlands. Furthermore political structures or qualification standards for professionals and voluntary workers dealing with the elderly and their relatives are of foremost interest for our working group.

The first aim of the PrimA-project is to analyze existing German and international models of preventive services for older people – this is where we will be turning to international partners as experts. Furthermore, developing guidelines and qualification standards for interdisciplinary prevention services for older people is another important part of our project.

Secondly, the project will explore options to utilize voluntary work potentials to implement such services in a sustained manner.

Beyond this we will address these important research questions:

- How can we promote a comprehensive approach to prevention, i.e. handling risks and activating potentials in older age?
- How can we help successful prevention models to a nationwide breakthrough?
- Which opportunities and limits does the involvement of voluntary workers have?
- How can existing social and health care services improve their reaction to prevention needs?
- Which new and sustainable approaches are useful for expanding existing preventive services for older people?
- Which recommendations can we give to funders, planners and professionals with respect to need-oriented services?

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