

# Employing family caregivers in home care agencies: Fostering an innovative model or blurring boundaries?

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**Kalaidos University  
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The University for Working Professionals.

# Programme

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- International and Swiss context of family carers
- Project development and preliminary results for employing family carers at home care agencies
- Conclusion



# Carers' needs internationally

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- C Choice**
- A Access**
- R Respect**
- E Education**
- R Recognition**
- S Support**



# The Swiss family carer and home care context

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- Since 1990ies: Various research studies on family carers, mainly with a gerontological focus
- Since 2007: Ongoing R+D programm «work & care» at Careum Research on reconciling employment and family care  
→ qualitative interview data showed home care agencies' practices of employing family carers
- Since 2014: National action plan «Supporting family carers»
- Most of home care nursing procedures are covered by the compulsory health insurance package, but not household chores and not companionship
- So far no data from national family caregiver survey



# Aims of employing family carers at home care agencies

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- To foster quality of care and patient safety
- To strengthen employability of family carers through recognition of their caregiving contributions for a professional career
- To guarantee social security of family carers even through minimal employment
- To contribute to the shortage of staff in home care agencies



# Our project activities so far...

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- **2012, May:** Event on the UN International Day of Families
- **2012 ff:** Several publications and presentations
- **2013:** Pilot R+D project on employing family carers
- **2015:** Grant preparation of a large R+D project together with a health care insurer and home care agencies

## **Pflegende Angehörige als Angestellte in der Spitex: Eine Annäherung aus rechtlicher, qualifikatorischer und konzeptioneller Perspektive**

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# Preliminary results (1)

## Legal aspects of employing of family carers

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- Employment according to general staffing standards, including salary
- Quality assurance according to existing legal regulations for home care agencies
- Recruitment includes additional discussion about motivation, relationship, and consent from the client



**Main point: Employing family carers is one supportive option amongst others.**

## Preliminary results (2)

### Caregiving aspects of employing family carers

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- Training courses & supervision of employed family carers by nurses & management
- Family and biographical relationship ease or hamper caregiving performance
- Home care agencies declare authority, support, facilitation of conflicts, and case management for employed family carers and respective households



**Main point: Home care agencies start to develop a mindset of family carers' high quality contributions within the team.**



# In sum: Meeting carers' needs through employment at a home care agency

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<b>C Choice</b>	Various needs – various choices
<b>A Access</b>	Professional documentation, team members, social security
<b>R Respect</b>	Better understanding between family carers and health care professionals, mutual respect for each others' roles
<b>E Education</b>	Transfer of experiences from family care to recognition for a formal health care qualification
<b>R Recognition</b>	Recognition of family carers' opinions within home care agency teams; legal procedures enhance recognition of knowledge
<b>S Support</b>	Integration in a team enhances quality control and patient safety in private households, particularly in difficult to reach (rural) areas

## Conclusion from a CEO

CEO of a large urban home care agency

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- «We should not evaluate the new employment model by potential worst case scenarios.»
- «We have not come as far as we should, but we will not go back again.»

# Contact

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