



EMMY

European Welfare Models and Mental Wellbeing in Final Years of Life .

IMPACT ON CIVIL SOCIETY AND POLICY

The European population demographic is changing rapidly. Life expectancy is steadily increasing and functional capacities are maintained for longer.

Combined with low fertility rates, this will lead to significant changes in the general age structure of the EU population, increasing the dependency ratio (people aged 65 or above relative to those aged 15-64) by a projected 50 %. Welfare systems need to be responsive to these changes, but are continually challenged by pressures related to limited public finances, changes in the labour market, and new patterns in population movement.

There has been little study in terms of what constitutes mental wellbeing and quality of life for the oldest old population, and the overarching aim of the EMMY project is to improve this knowledge and understanding. More specifically, the project will look at how different welfare models and related public policies including health and social care service approaches (both general and age specific), can benefit from adaptation by targeting the mental wellbeing in the oldest-old age group.

The EMMY Project will assess mental health impacts for four welfare models (two Nordic models and two Mediterranean models) by assessing policy effects on equity, social inclusion, empowerment, social capital, participation and wider structural determinants of mental health in old age.

The EMMY Project is timely, because welfare models in Europe need to be recast to deal with one of the major societal challenges of today: population ageing. Welfare models will have to use resources more efficiently to create wellbeing among the old, without unduly sacrificing key principles such as solidarity.

The mental wellbeing impact of policies is not always obvious. The EMMY project aims to unravel this impact, furthering existing knowledge of how to best include mental well being in all policy areas. Results will be made easily accessible by way of comparative analyses, impact assessment tools and good practice case studies.



SUMMARY

The EMMY Project is an interdisciplinary, mixed methods comparative study on the impact of welfare systems on mental wellbeing among the oldest old in Finland, Italy, Norway and Spain.

The concept of mental wellbeing at old age will be approached by qualitative methods, and links between welfare systems and mental wellbeing by quantitative methods.

Promising welfare policies and initiatives will be highlighted through case studies, culminating in a research-based decision support tool assessing the mental wellbeing impact of welfare policies.

Focusing on equity, social inclusion, empowerment and participation, the overarching aim of the EMMY project is to improve knowledge and understanding of how different approaches to welfare policy can benefit from targeting the mental wellbeing of the oldest-old.

The project supports a paradigm shift from focusing on mental disorders to focusing on mental wellbeing. This shift is key, not only due to the ageing of the European population overall, but also in relation to increasing pressures on public finances.

CONSORTIUM

The international and interdisciplinary consortium consists of five partners from four European countries led by Professor Kristian Wahlbeck, National Institute for Health and Welfare (THL) Finland.

All partners have a leading role in different aspects of the mixed methods design of the project.

The EMMY project consortium includes, National Institute for Health and Welfare (THL) Finland, Åbo Akademi University Finland, SINTEF Norway, The Autonomous University of Madrid (UAM) Spain, and the University of Verona (UNIVR) Italy

