

Implementation of Naturopathic Methods in Geriatric Nursing Homes - Results of a Cross-Sectional Study (Part B)

Summary:

Background and Objectives: Naturopathic methods including the so called Kneipp®-Therapy are a part of the Traditional European Medicine and include a combination of hydrotherapy, herbal medicine, mind-body therapies, physical activities and healthy nutrition. As of 2007, geriatric nursing homes in Germany started to implement Kneipp®-Therapy. To build a scientific basis for further research on effects we performed a cross-sectional study and a qualitative study (data not published here) to firstly evaluate the situation of the residents and the caregivers who received or applied Kneipp®-Therapy.

Methods: The evaluation was performed in four Kneipp®-nursing homes between September and December 2011 to assess the health status of residents and caregivers. Furthermore, work ability and job situation of the caregivers and the implementation of Kneipp®-Therapies were assessed. Outcome parameters for the residents included the Quality of life in dementia (Qualidem), the Profile of Wellbeing (PoW), the Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADL) and the Barthel Index. Work Ability Index (WAI), quality of life questionnaire SF-12 and the Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire (COPSOQ) were outcome parameters for the caregivers.

Results: Sixty-four residents (53 female, 83.2 ± 8.1 years (mean and SD)) and twenty-nine caregivers (all female, 42.0 ± 11.7 years) could be included for the evaluation. On average residents suffered from 8 diagnoses (81% cardiovascular diseases) and took a mean of 8 different medications daily. The Quality of life (PoW: 25.2 ± 3.1 ; Qualidem) was considered to be good. Daily self-care activities measured by the IADL (2.5 ± 1.6) and by the Barthel Index (60.6 ± 24.4) were clearly restricted. 89% considered naturopathic care to be positive for well-being. The caregivers indicated on average a good work ability (WAI 37.4 ± 5.1). Quality of life was better compared to the German sample of staff in nursing homes (mean SF-12 physical CSS 49.2 ± 8.0 ; mental CSS 54.1 ± 6.6). The COPSOQ showed remarkably positive results for the items interpersonal relation, leadership, job safety and life satisfaction. 96 % of the caregivers considered Kneipp®-Therapies to be beneficial for health and well-being.

Conclusion: The results show a great acceptance of naturopathy in residents and staff of geriatric-nursing homes. Our results justify further research on the effects of Kneipp®-Therapies on health status and quality of life in residents and caregivers.

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