

An evaluation of the Flanders Care Living Labs

Charlotte Brys, Lien Pots, Hakim Benichou, Juul Lemey, Ezra Dessers, Geert Van Hootehem, Mark Leys, Ellen Gorus and Patricia De Vriendt on behalf of KIO.¹

Introduction:

In 2012, the Flemish government (Belgium) launched a call for Care Living Labs targeting on innovation in elderly care. Flanders Care Living Labs aims at facilitating the innovation of new care concepts, services, processes and products, in cooperation with the users, and to test them in real life settings. Initially, four Care Living Labs, with each their own focus, were selected. The 'Knowledge Innovation Center for Elderly Care' (KIO) is the scientific consortium responsible for monitoring and evaluating the Care Living Labs.

Methods:

KIO made a plan evaluation of the Care Living Lab designs, based on a document analysis of the submitted proposals. An inductive analysis was performed on the underlying designs, e.g. models in ageing and target group, inter-organizational collaboration, task division and job quality, to explore the views of the individual living labs on care innovation for elderly in different domains. Thereafter these visions were compared with the prevailing theories about innovation through deductive analysis. In a second phase semi-structured interviews were conducted with the coordinators of the living labs to collect missing data and to verify the results of the analyses performed in the first phase.

Results:

The preliminary evaluation shows three major results. (1) No explicit models are used by the Care Living Labs in order to approach the target group of elderly. The different target groups are broad and varied, including younger seniors, frail elderly, chronically ill individuals and people with cognitive impairment. (2) Large differences can be seen between the Care Living Labs with regard to the complexity, construction and governance of the inter-organizational networks. (3) The four proposals all mention the need for a more integrated care, but seem to lack attention for organizational concepts, although related aspects of job quality are taken into account.

Conclusions:

The preliminary evaluation shows different approaches between the four Care Living Labs, which provides opportunities for further comparative analysis.

¹ KIO is an interuniversity consortium studying innovations in elderly care in Flanders. The consortium consists of Mark Leys & Lien Pots (OPIH-VUB), Ellen Gorus & Charlotte Brys (GERO-VUB), Ezra Dessers, Geert Van Hootehem & Hakim Benichou (CESO-KUL), Marc Jegers & Lies Van Pee (iCher), Patricia De Vriendt & Juul Lemey (Arteveldehogeschool), Bart Jansen (ETRO-VUB), Bart Mistiaen & Bart Grimonprez (HOWEST). The consortium is financed by the Flemish agency for Innovation by Science and Technology (IWT).