

An evaluation of the concept of Flanders Care Living Labs

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Introduction:

In 2012, the Flemish government (Belgium) launched a call for Care Living Labs targeting on innovation in elderly care. The aim is to create new care concepts, services, processes and products, in cooperation with the users, and to test them in real life settings. In a first phase, four Care Living Labs 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 qualitative evaluation of the Care Living Lab designs, based on a document analysis of the submitted proposals. This abstract reports on the evaluation of the underlying designs, e.g. models in ageing and target group, inter-organizational collaboration, task division and job quality.

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 target group is 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 (like task division and coordination), 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 Hootegem & 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).