



Competence development of an ageing workforce in German hospitals

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Background – Why older workers (I)?

- Negative stereotypes of older workers and age discrimination.
 - More often not promoted nor provided opportunities for personal and professional development (Bayl-Smith & Griffin, 2014; Kunze et al., 2011).
 - Seems to affect older employees' disengagement starting several years prior to retirement transition (Calo et al., 2013; Bayl-Smith & Griffin, 2014; Kulik et al., 2016; Zaniboni, 2015).
 - ICT skills not sufficient to deal with digitisation & digitalisation.
 - Older worker call in sick more often.
- Continuously more important in times of a lack of qualified personnel;
- Danger of losing knowledge and challenging transfer of tacit knowledge.

Background – Why older workers (II)?

- Employees' preparedness to manage their own career is an important personal resource, in particular in uncertain late career situations (Lent, 2013; Sweeny et al., 2006; Vuori and Vinokur, 2005).
- "Preparedness can be seen as a motivator in a process whereby individuals adjust to their work environment, make plans, set goals, strive to improve their future, and evaluate their possibilities and competencies in achieving these goals" (Vuori et al., 2012: 2)

Background – Why health and social care (I)?

- The sector is characterised by a rising demand for workers.
 - The workforce is older than other sectors – one third of workers is at least 50 years old and will leave the labour market within the next 15 years (Schulz 2013).
 - It shows a high rate of part-time employment: 32% of persons employed in this sector work under this regime (European Commission 2014).
 - Health and social care is characterised by challenging working conditions (physically and mentally) leading to absenteeism, burn out and drop-outs.
 - It has a lack of skilled workers which leads to a shortage in some European countries.
- The sector is under pressure to develop new concepts to make health care work less vulnerable and more attractive.

Age and ageing management

- „Consideration of age-related factors affecting both white and blue collar employees in the daily management, design, and organization of individual work tasks, as well as the work environment, so that everybody, regardless of age, feels empowered in reaching both personal and corporate goals“ (Ilmarinen 2008)
- Usually it is distinguished between age- and ageing-management
 - Age-management aims at measures to support workers being already old
 - Ageing-management can be characterised as preventive, is focussing on the later phases of working life courses („to prevent remote damages on later stages of working lives, to allow workers to stay old in their jobs „in dignity“)

Good practices

- Naegele & Walker (2006) defined good practice in age management 'as those measures that combat age barriers and/or promote age diversity' in one or more dimensions of practice that relate to the employment cycle.
 - Recruitment
 - Initial induction, training and lifelong learning
 - career development
 - flexible working time practices
 - health protection and promotion, and workplace design
 - redeployment
 - employment exit and the transition to retirement
- Training: Good practice in this field means ensuring that older workers are not neglected in training and career development, that opportunities for learning are offered throughout working life, that training methods are appropriate to older workers, and that positive action is taken where necessary to compensate for discrimination in the past (Walker 1997: 4).
- Good practice in health protection, health promotion and workplace design means optimising work processes and the organisation of work to enable employees to perform well and to ensure their health and capacity to work (Naegele & Walker 2000: 8).

Care 4.0 and an ageing workforce

- Trend of digitisation and digitalisation in hospitals.
 - Although there is a lack of valid data, there seems to be a significant increase of digital technologies.
 - There is evidence that older worker tend to face greater challenges, due to:
 - Lack of ICT-literacy
 - Resistance of change
 - With increasing age there is a higher chance of feeling less informed about changes, not being qualified or included into decision processes.
- How to develop strategies to increase competencies of older workers?
- Pairing teams of older an younger worker
 - Peer approaches
 - Participatory design and implementation of digital technologies

Preliminary results

- Age management (focus older workers) is not on the agenda and not ranked as a high priority.
- Most important measures today
 - Recruitment of highly qualified personnel
 - Further training of workforce
- Technology is on the agenda, although still at the beginning.
- Age management is seen as a strategical aspect for the future, in particular by larger organisations.
- More evidence for interventional strategies is needed (evidence free zone).
- Almost no evaluation of measures by the organisations.
- Low awareness for age management by works councils and unions?
- Champions are needed!

Thanks for your attention!

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