Age-friendly Hospitals and Health Services

Competent response to ageing in all organizational units of the health care system

Towards a recognition procedure for members of the Austrian Network of Health Promoting Hospitals and Health Services

Birgit METZLERa, Rainer CHRISTb, Ulrike SOMMEREGERa, Angelika KRESNIKc

a: Austrian Public Health Institute (Gesundheit Österreich GmbH); b: Austrian Network of Health Promoting Hospitals and Health Services

Background

Due to the demographic development and the increasing incidence of illnesses of all kinds associated with old age, a large proportion of all patients in health care facilities are people in their eighth, ninth and tenth decade of life. This is associated with a high prevalence of limitations of sensory abilities, mobility and orientation with increased risk of hospital-associated functional decline.

Older patients are not only on geriatrics, but everywhere in our health services – that is why we have to deal with them competently.

Nevertheless, these facts are not yet sufficiently taken into account in basic training and education for health care professionals, in general organizational conditions and in the design of the physical environment of health care services. In order to raise awareness and provide guidance, a task force of the International Network of Health Promoting Hospitals and HealthCare Services (HPH) has developed standards and measurable indicators that can be used for self-assessment and certification as an age-friendly healthcare organization: Taiwan’s Framework of Age-Friendly Health Care.

Taiwan’s Framework of Age-Friendly Health Care

The Taiwanese framework is based on the WHO age-friendly-principles, standards of health promoting hospitals and the Elder-Friendly Hospital Initiative in Canada. It consists of four standards, 11 substandards and 60 measurable items. The aim of the framework is to support health care organizations in developing age-friendly and health promoting structures, decisions and processes, as well as a corresponding organizational culture.

Focus on health care staff

In the standards of the Taiwanese framework, the health care staff is not explicitly considered and only mentioned in terms of their qualification and responsibility for good communication. However, since the staff of health care organizations is one of the three target groups in the HPH concept (along with patients and the community), an additional standard is being developed for the recognition procedure of the Austrian Network of Health Promoting Hospitals and Health Services (ONGKG) that takes ageing staff into account.

Recognition procedures developed in Austria in this subject area have been reviewed (e.g. NESTOR) and the Seal of Quality for Effective Generational Management) and in a next step, specific guidelines for health care organizations have been deduced. The following topics are taken into account: managerial responsibility, age-appropriate work organization, appreciative organizational culture, equal opportunities and intergenerational dialogue.

 Developing a recognition procedure for age-friendly health services in Austria

A working group of the ONGKG is adapting the Taiwanese framework to Austrian conditions and adding the focus on health care staff.

First results will be presented at the 24th Austrian Conference on Health Promoting Hospitals and Health Services, which will take place from 14-15 November 2019 at the Klinikum Bad Gleichenberg, Styria, on the topic of „Age-friendly Health Services – Contributions of Health Promotion.” For more information go to www.ongkg.at

Objectives of the recognition procedure

- Awareness raising
- Benchmarking
- Quality development towards age-friendliness

Planned support measures for recognition as an age-friendly health care organization

- Joint learning and mutual support for further development within the Austrian Network of Health Promoting Hospitals and Health Services
- Staff training and awareness-raising workshops (age-friendly organizational structures and processes, ...)

Contact: ongkg@ongkg.at