

# Evaluation of Dementia Care Networks in Germany – An example of translational health care research

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**Background:** Dementia disease implies a complex interdisciplinary and multi-professional management. Actually, there is no systematic coordination of medical care services and support for persons with dementia (PWD) in several health care systems. Dementia care networks (DCN) aim to overcome this problem to improve treatment and care for PWD by integration of relevant health care actors. Empirical data concerning the effectiveness of such DCN as well as factors that influence effectiveness and sustainability of DCN are currently missing.

**Aims:** (1) To analyze the utilization of dementia-specific treatment and care in DCN, (2) to identify (financial) challenges and (3) determinants for success in regional dementia care networks; (4) to support sustainable implementation of successful structures (translation).

**Methods:** Interdisciplinary evaluation of Dementia Networks in Germany (DemNet-D), including 13 DCN and 560 dyads of PWD and their caregivers. Qualitative analyses were based on standardized interviews with representatives of the DCN, quantitative analyses on primary data obtained in face-to-face interviews with PWD and their caregivers. Patients outcomes were compared to results of previously conducted studies focusing treatment of PWD in primary or nursing care settings.

## Results (I): DCN improve treatment and care in dementia disease

❖ DCN users more often received treatment by general practitioners (93% vs. 90%) and neurologist/psychiatrists (74% vs 31%), anti-dementia drugs (52% vs. 30%), non-pharmacological treatments, like physiotherapy (24% vs. 6%) and occupational therapy (15% vs. 6%) compared to primary and nursing care settings.

## Results (II): Predictors for financial sustainability

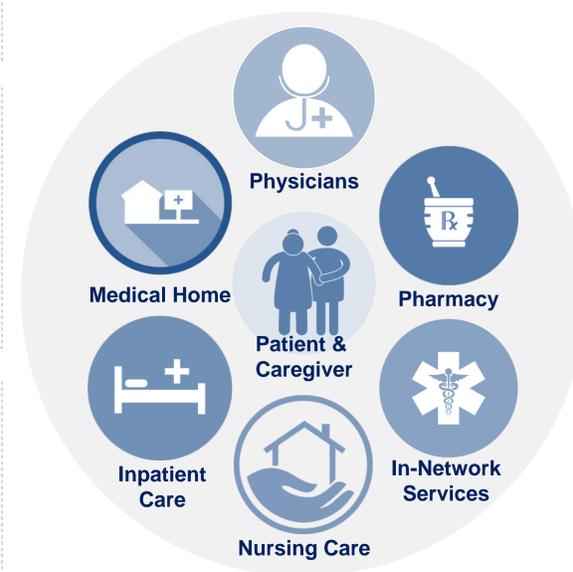
- ❖ Secure funding of more than 50.000\$/year for human resource coordinating the DCN
- ❖ Mix of different financing sources
- ❖ Investments of the municipality.

## Translating scientific evidence into practically relevant information

The scientific evidence concerning “building up”, “financing”, “practicing” and “evaluating” DCN were translated into practically relevant information and published on an online-information-portal to support existing or emerging DCN.

**Scientific outlook:** Results of the DemNet-D study had a policy impact on German legislation: nursing health care insurances can support DCN with an annual funding of up to 20.000\$ per DCN (§45c social security statute book XI). DCN improve treatment and care in dementia and successfully support caregivers. The funding as well as the online-based toolbox are important steps towards the sustainability of existing and the initiation of new DCN.

Figure 1: Components of dementia care networks



## Online-Information-Portal [www.demenznetzwerke.de](http://www.demenznetzwerke.de)

## Toolbox with 136 tools/ documents obtained from different German DCN, including:

- ❖ Curricula, manuals/ guidelines, concepts, status report, contracts, cooperation agreements, liquidity plans (...)
- ❖ Since the launch of this website in September 2015, totally 5,819 visitors were counted, and 10,909 downloads of tools were recorded (Statistics from 15th March 2017).

## More than 40 pages addressing different issues, including:

- ❖ Concepts for sustainable financing dementia care networks
- ❖ Lifelong learning – Trainings and seminars for the development and communication of knowledge in dementia care networks