

## Service optimization

<b>Research question</b>	
How can outpatient hospice volunteers be integrated in end-of-life-care in long-term-care facilities?	
<b>Project Title</b>	
Improving long-term-care at the end of life	
<b>Background:</b> (max. 300 words)	
<p>An increasing amount of older people in industrialized countries have loose or lacking family bonds, resulting in an increased demand for long-term-care (LTC) in their last years of life (SOURCES). Older people not only live there, they also die there. However, evidence shows a lack of palliative care education among LTC staff (SOURCES). Additionally, their busy work schedule often times does not allow for the integration of palliative care elements into their work (SOURCES). For these reasons, new legislation in COUNTRY demands the cooperation of LTC-facilities with ambulatory hospice care (SOURCE). However, there is a lack of evidence about how volunteers can successfully be integrated in everyday care routines in CITY, COUNTRY. This is a relevant question considering the above mentioned time and resource constraints of nursing staff.</p>	
<b>Aims/Objectives:</b> (max. 200 words)	
<p>To analyse the success factors (chances and challenges) for the integration of ambulatory hospice care in LTC-facilities, using qualitative research (interviews with nurses and volunteers, N&gt;X). Analysis will be conducted using a between-respondents comparison design with qualitative content analysis. The project will be conducted in CITY, COUNTRY.</p>	
<b>Activities:</b> (max. 500 words)	
<p>A literature search will be conducted in order to gain knowledge about the experience of other countries with integrating volunteers into elderly care/LTC. The extracted knowledge will be used to design the interview guide for the half-structured interviews. LTC-facilities and outpatient hospice services in CITY, COUNTRY will then receive invitations to participate in the study. Ethics protocols will be sent to interested LTC-facilities and outpatient hospice services, asking for official approval to conduct the interviews. The aim is to recruit as least three LTC-facilities. If this goal is not met, LTC-facilities in CITY 2, COUNTRY will be asked for participation. Comparability is guaranteed because of REASON 1,2,3. Concrete interview partners will be selected applying pre-defined criteria. Qualitative content analysis will then be conducted using SOFTWARE and results will be discussed, focusing on similarities and differences of the respondents views on the addressed topics.</p>	
<b>Timeframe</b>	
09/2021 – 02/2022	Literature search
02/2022 – 03/2022	Design of the half-structured interview guide and pretest
Start date – end date	...
12/2022 – 02/2023	Write project report
<b>Opportunities and Limitations</b> (max. 300 words)	
<p>The major opportunity is to enrich end-of-life-care for residents by defining the roles of formal caregivers and volunteers. Another opportunity is the possible self-reflection of formal and informal care staff about their roles in end-of-life-care. The reflection about potential roles of volunteers in the caring process may lead to an empowered view on the nursing profession and on hospice care. However, this self-reflection can also have an opposite effect and lead to competition among carers and volunteers. Another opportunity is the greater awareness of care aspects at the end of life for both nursing staff and volunteers. A potential limitation could be the participation of LTC-facilities, who already successfully integrated ambulatory hospice care into the nurses work schedule, leading to selection bias of the sample.</p>	
<b>Stakeholders</b> (max. 300 words)	
<p>Key stakeholders are residents and their families because they are to ones addressed by the volunteer's work. Nurses working in the LTC-facilities and the volunteers of the outpatient hospice care teams are also stakeholders because their successful cooperation is key for delivering high quality end-of-life-care. Chairs of foundation XY, of which I am an active member, approve the project proposal and offered financial support. As the results will be presented to them, they are also considered as a stakeholder of this project.</p>	
<b>Resources</b> (max. 500 words)	

As a GP in CITY, COUNTRY I have contact to most of the LTC-facilities in the town. Financial support and encouragement by foundation XY is granted. The technical equipment for conducting and analysing the interviews is borrowed or financed by the foundation. The observation week will take place in a LTC-facility in CITY, COUNTRY, where they already successfully integrated volunteers. Attendance of the course weeks and the observation week is enabled by a colleague.