Health Care Research

The approach of health care research to investigate its conditions and its potential for improvement is interdisciplinary. It explains health care, develops study- and evidence-based concepts and programmes, and evaluates the implementation of innovations in health care. One important characteristic is the investigation under everyday conditions in contrast to experimental studies. The methodology is mainly influenced by that of the social sciences.

Currently, there is no cure for dementia, therefore psychosocial interventions, including education, support, counselling and respite care are extremely important, both for patients and family caregivers. Goals of care are to maintain the functioning of the individual, to reduce disability due to lost cognitive functions and improve quality of life, to minimize disability-related suffering such as depression and challenging behaviour, and to provide support for family caregivers. This means also to ensure effective, sustainable, cost-effective improvements in care services and structures, to implement knowledge and innovations, and to investigate the best methods of implementation.

The quality of living with dementia depends on the person themselves and their biography, the personal care and the social and material environment. Therefore, dementia care is culture-specific. Experiences from other countries cannot always be transferred to the German context and particularly migrants need an extra awareness. Moreover, the regulatory system is also important since the care potential depends on health care services and the whole health care system including reimbursement regulations (e.g. long-term care insurance, LTCI).

Health care research at the DZNE focuses on the German situation and works on different levels. Our research focuses include:

- characterizing the health care situation of people with dementia
- improving quality of life and maintaining the functioning
- minimizing disability-related suffering
- testing efficacy, efficiency and effectiveness of novel concepts in dementia care

Although there are a great variety of studies on dementia care, precise interventions in this field are complex, and have to be implemented in complex situations and surroundings. This means that one focus has to be directed to methodological questions.