

Person-centred residential care: how to ensure that residents stay part of the community

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During the COVID-19 pandemic residents and staff of residential care facilities were forgotten in the initial planning and management of the pandemic, and they stayed isolated for most of the time. Based on a project conducted in collaboration with the European Social Network, this paper discusses the question of how to design person-centred residential care as part of an age-friendly community.

The topic of community-connected, person-centred, co-designed residential care is virtually non-existent in the scientific literature. Apart from disease-specific or clinical studies, the key topics discussed were the impact of COVID-19 on mortality and morbidity in nursing homes, the availability and quality of end-of-life and palliative care, and the need for specific training on person-centred care for staff members and managers. A mapping exercise resulted in 24 good practice examples, 13 of which specifically focused on residential care, 5 on community building, and 6 are approaches of general support. While the scientific evidence comes primarily from Scandinavia, the case examples come from other parts of Europe, North America and Japan.

There is a dire need to expand research and practice to consider all forms of residences and settings of care for older people. The evidence identified emphasises the need for a much broader approach to housing in old age, taking into account different needs, preferences and structures, and thus seeing housing along a continuum, which is adapted to the progressive needs of older people. This also means embedding residential care concepts within an age-friendly community.