

Thematic Panel 3 – Reablement as a mechanism for sustainability and active long-term care

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Convenor and Discussant:

Tine Rostgaard, Professor, VIVE – The Danish Centre for Social Science Research, Denmark

With ageing societies and the need for sustainable solutions to providing individualized care for older people, the study of reablement is important in an international setting. It is a policy practice recommended by the European Commission, and reablement is presently tried out nationally or locally in a number of countries (Canada, Denmark, Norway, England, New Zealand, Australia and the Netherlands). Reablement implies a goal-oriented, short-term and intensive intervention of typically 12 weeks, where cross-disciplinary teams of e.g. home care workers and occupational therapists in cooperation with the older person identify and work towards a specific outcome of the intervention, i.e. it has potentials for being person-centered. The outcome is usually related to gaining independence in daily activities, such as shopping, cleaning or general physical mobility, or more overall, to improve quality of life. In Denmark, a study showed that 60% of home care users regain sufficient functional ability and for shorter or longer periods again become independent of home care services (Lauritzen, et al, 2017). Reablement seems to hold significant potential as more and more people age, and also has potential in facilitating cross-disciplinary and inter-sectoral cooperation. Investigations in Denmark also found that social care workers working with reablement were more satisfied with working conditions (Rostgaard and Matthiessen, 2016).

However, research on reablement and its conditionalities and outcomes for both users and care workers is scarce, uncoordinated and lacks focus, nationally as well as internationally. Part of the reason for the scattered approach is that it is a new and so far unexplored research field, with a lack of conceptual clarity. As Legg et al (2016, p. 741) reablement is an 'ill-defined intervention with no sound theoretical or conceptual basis, which go against best practice' (ibid, p. 746). We need to address how the introduction of reablement changes perceptions to ageing and individual

responsibility for ageing well. Gaps exist in evidence around successful model components, which professionals to involve and how to stimulate cross-disciplinary cooperation, and which users benefit most from what type of reablement intervention. There is also lack of research into unintended effects such as loneliness, and research tends to focus on small timeframes (Aspinal et al, 2016). Finally, we need to address more overall issues such as how reablement affects understandings of right to care and quality of care as well as responsibility for individual health in a governance perspective.

This panel aims at contributing to these questions as well as investigating reablement from a policy and aging perspective. It invites papers focused on:

- Paradigms of ageing and reablement
- Professional logics
- The genesis of reablement and spread between countries and the processes and practices applied
- Effective mechanisms in the organization and application, such as promoting user and staff motivation and engagement
- Perspectives from older people and their informal carers
- Technology of reablement