

Covid-19 and LTC in Norway

LTCovid workshop 7th December 2021

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Norwegian LTCovid: focus on nursing homes

- App. 1/3 of municipalities lacked protective equipment first weeks
- Nearly 50 % of COVID-related deaths took place in nursing homes
 - Mid-March 2020 – end of Feb 2021: 291 COVID-19 related death were in nursing homes of a total of 638 in the Norwegian population
 - 1 % of the NH residents died COVID-related, 3 % infected
 - Most experienced visitor restrictions. Physical and mental decline of residents.
- Huge variation between NHs
 - 4 out of 10 deaths in 10 NHs, out of a total of around 700 NHs
 - Likely reasons (based on interviews with leaders, physicians and care staff: 1. Hard to stop after introduced, 2. use of parttime and temporary staff; and, 3. older buildings with less opportunities for isolation and for infection control
(Jacobsen et al. 2021; Strand 2020)
- Supportive housing:
 - 31,5 % of municipalities introduced visitor restrictions, of which only 28,2 % had citizens infected by Covid 19 (Deloitte 2021)
- Home-based services: reduced practical assistance in most municipalities
(Norwegian Board of Health Supervision 2020)

Some lessons learned

- ❖ Preventive and protective measures in infection control in municipal health and care services should be prioritized
- ❖ Preparing long-term care for future pandemics means first and foremost improving conditions for care in general (care as in a normal situation)
- ❖ There need to be a strengthening of the NHs regarding staffing, terms of employment, and, for nursing homes, the built environment
- ❖ The fact that some staff work at more than one care home, and sometimes also in other sectors (e.g. restaurants) reveals the need for better paid staff with secure employment terms
- ❖ There needs to be increased efforts at strengthening cooperation and integration between care staff and cleaning staff in nursing homes and supportive housing
- ❖ Further development of IT-solutions based on experiences during the pandemic is necessary, for enhancing resident-family communication
- ❖ A nationwide mapping with regard to LTC COVID-19 experiences needed

Reforms

- December 2020: Next-of-kin of victims of Covid-19 in nursing get the right of a financial compensation from the Norwegian government (through the system of The Norwegian System of Patient Injury Compensation, NPE)
- New health reform in place 1st September 2021, right to user choice of supplier of institution-based and home-based care (move made by previous center-right government)
 - Present red-green government presently works to reverse this reform, arguing that Covid-19 infections has claimed more lives in for-profit nursing homes, due to more workers working at more that one institution in the for-profit NH sector
- The bigger picture: a general lack of reforms, so far, related to the LTC sector resulting from the Covid-19 experiences

References

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