

Healthcare-Seeking by Older People in Germany

The social and institutional context of decision-making in the case of sickness

1 SUMMARY

Motivation

- Understanding the processes of decision-making and care-seeking in the event of sickness
- Contributing to the development of an integrative theoretical framework of illness behavior

Research Questions

- What are the healthcare needs of older people in Germany?
- How do people manage these needs?
- How do social networks and the institutional features of the healthcare system influence the processes of decision-making and healthcare-seeking?

Data

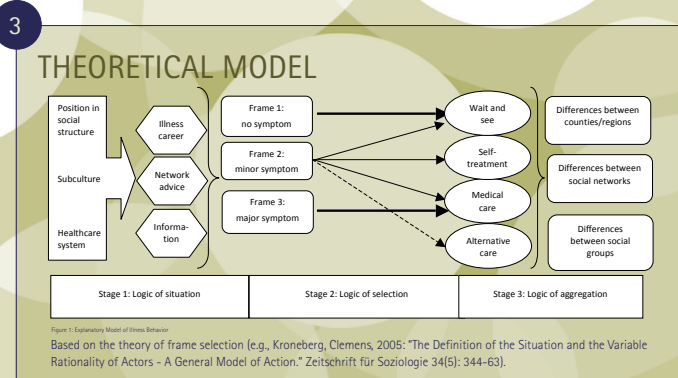
- Representative survey data on people above age 65 living in Germany

Funding

- The project is funded by the DFG from November 2012 to October 2015

2 INNOVATIVE FEATURES

- Symptom-specific assessment of utilization behavior
- Capturing patterns and sequences of the decision-making process
- Taking into account the interpretation of symptoms and health attitudes
- Covering a variety of care strategies, e.g., alternative healthcare providers and self-care
- Analyzing the influence of the social network and institutional features of the healthcare system on these dynamics



4 RESEARCH DESIGN

Sampling

- A representative sample of persons aged 65 and older
- Effective sample size: 2,000
- Three-stage probability sampling

Data collection mode

- Computer-assisted personal interview (CAPI) of 60 minutes
- Computer-assisted follow-up interview of 15 minutes two weeks after the personal interview
- Four-week health diaries for a sub-sample of 50 respondents
- All data will be collected by a survey institute

Instruments applied

- Standard-demographics
- Health
- Somatic symptoms
- Health beliefs
- Healthcare utilization
- Self-care
- Egocentric networks
- Healthcare system characteristics
- Use of scales from existing surveys & development of new scales

5 EXEMPLARY ITEMS

Symptoms

How much have you been bothered by the following symptoms over the past four weeks? We capture a variety of symptoms such as headaches, back pain, pain in the arms or hands, dizziness, shortness of breath, and fatigue.

Healthcare-seeking behavior

Which of the following people did you contact because of [THE SYMPTOM]?

- No one
- Family member
- Friends
- Neighbors, acquaintances
- Colleagues
- Family doctor
- Specialist, namely _____
- Emergency room / hospital
- Alternative practitioner
- Physiotherapist
- Psychotherapist
- Other therapist _____
- Pharmacist
- Internet
- Other _____

Social Network

What did [THE PERSON] with whom you talked about [THE SYMPTOM] recommend?

- Waiting
- Visiting a doctor
- Visiting an alternative practitioner
- Taking a homeopathic or herbal remedy
- Taking a different OTC drug
- Taking a prescription drug
- Applying a household remedy
- Applying a change of behavior: rest, exercise
- Something different, namely _____

6 TEAM AND CONTACT

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