

ABSTRACT

TITLE

Osteopathy as a home visit for elderly people - Development task of designing a new service concept

AUTHORS

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PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to enhance elderly people's ability to live at home independently by developing an osteopathic home visit service.

OBJECTIVE

The main purpose of the study was to develop new and innovative services for elderly people. Other aims are to find out what special considerations from an osteopathic perspective there are regarding osteopathic consultation settings in the customer's home environment. Osteopathic home visit services are designed for elderly people, who are not able to leave their home to visit osteopathic clinic for consultation. Objectives are to help to maintain a good general state of body functions and to enhance the ability to live at home as independently as possible. The study was conducted authentically at an elderly people's assisted residence as a part of a project called "Wellbeing and Energy Efficiency in Living".

SUBJECTS

The subjects for the study live in their own apartment in an assisted residence in Mäntsälä Finland. This residence provides services such as home visit and catering services for over 40 elderly people.

METHODS

Home visit service for elderly people was developed using the service design method, and the main focus was on elderly people's needs regarding independent living in home environment as maintaining their functioning on a daily basis. We also investigated how home visit services work as a concept e.g. how an osteopath would handle bookings and organize the consultation setting in a home environment. We offered two osteopathic consultations for 20 people during the spring 2012. Consultations were performed by 3rd year osteopathic students under supervision.

RESULTS

Preliminary results indicate that osteopathic home visit service improved the elderly's ability to live at home independently. Most people that were treated also experienced reduced pain. Often the reason to visit an osteopath was some painful condition, but within this intervention the scope of the osteopathic treatment was enlarged to the activities of daily living. We also found out that providing moveable services an osteopath needs to take an active role, and apply good communication skills in organizing bookings for elderly residents with the residence staff.

CONCLUSIONS

Osteopathic home visit services are suitable for elderly people who cannot visit osteopathic clinics themselves. The clinical consultation practice needs to be modified for home environment, however. One of the main challenges is booking consultation times for people, whose communicating abilities are diminished because of e.g. impaired hearing or dementia. Another issue in working with elderly people is the extensive usage of different kinds of medication, and their effects on people's

condition. The dosage of osteopathic consultation must also be considered carefully, so that side effects of the treatment are minimized. In the future it would be interesting to study outcomes of multiple treatment sessions in a homogenous group of elderly people, monitoring pain reduction and more specific body functioning.