Institutional and supported home-care of dementia patients in Finland in 1995

Nylander Olli
STAKES, National Research Centre for Welfare and Health, Unit of Statistics and Registers
Siltasaarenkatu 18 A
FIN-00530 Helsinki, Finland
ollni.nylander@stakes.fi

Viramo Petteri
petteri.viramo@oulu.fi

Kauppinen Sari, Nikiforov Oleg, Karjalainen Timo, Nenonen Mikko T
STAKES, National Research Centre for Welfare and Health, Unit of Statistics and Registers
Siltasaarenkatu 18 A
FIN-00530 Helsinki, Finland
sari.kauppinen@stakes.fi
oleg.nikiforov@stakes.fi
timo.karjalainen@stakes.fi
mikko.nenonen@stakes.fi

Frey Harry
hfrey@tays.fi

National care registers as an information resource for dementia research

Dementia is a syndrome with multiple etiologies. Some 200 different factors may cause dementia syndrome. Memory disturbances and other cognitive symptoms are the main symptoms of dementia. It causes loss of functional abilities and increases the need of personal assistance. According to normal epidemiological studies Alzheimer’s disease and vascular dementia are the most common causes of dementia. Some 9.5 percent of persons aged 60 years or more suffer from dementia in Europe. The prevalence increases with advancing age, being around 25 % among people aged 85 or more. In Finland there are some 110 000 persons suffering from mild to severe dementia. In the early stages of the disorder almost all persons are taken care at home by their family-caregivers, but in the moderate and severe stage every second dementia-patient is cared for by institutions or nursing homes in Finland.

Until now studies of dementia have been primarily based on epidemiological surveys. In Finland, however, data on all activities within the public and private social welfare and health care sector is collected in the Finnish national care registers. It contains information on all in-patient activities from hospitals, nursing home use, and use of home care and health services. It was therefore decided to evaluate and calculate the use of institutional care and costs of services for dementia patients in Finland. This study is a part of a larger project aiming at 1) developing and validating the register, 2) creating a larger Nordic data-base and 3) facilitating the prospective data-analysis of the use of services of this large patient population.
Material and methods

The data-recordings in the national care register are labelled with personal ID-numbers, which makes it possible to link the different care episodes of same person. The study material was collected in three phases: Identification of all persons with dementia that received care or treatment from the year 1990 to 1995 (180000 persons received care in institutions during those years) was done based on the list ICD-9 diagnosis codes. The use of social welfare and health care services in 1995 was calculated and the costs of use were evaluated.

Results

58 466 different persons with any disorder causing dementia had been treated in institutional care during the year 1995. The most common diagnosis (38%) was for dementia of an unknown cause NUD (2900A) (N=22640), the consequences of cerebrovascular diseases being the second most common (23%) (4380A) (N=13682). 3838 persons were suffering from multi-infarct dementia (4378A) and 2275 persons (4%) from Alzheimer’s disease (3310A). The men/women ratio was 0.557 among all dementia cases but only 0.358 among definite dementia cases. 12 % of all cases were aged 65 or under and 29 % of identified cases were aged 85 or over. In younger age groups the men/women ratio was higher than in older age groups. On the 31.12.1995 there was 34 072 persons with dementia disorders in institutions, in sheltered housing units or in supported home-care. During the year 1995, persons with dementia had spent altogether 8.917 million days in institutions, of which almost 90 % was in primary wards or nursing homes. Demented persons accounted for 33 % of all in-institutions days in Finland in 1995, but in primary wards and nursing homes 61 % of all in-institutions days were due to dementia. The annual cost of care of dementia patients in hospitals, primary wards or nursing homes was 5.0 billion Finnish marks (FIM) (1.145 billion USD), the average cost per dementia patient being 85 576 FIM (19583 USD).

Discussion

The register-based period-prevalence of dementia in Finland was 6.3 % among persons aged 65 or over. It is just 20 % lower than the result from the re-evaluation of Finnish population-based prevalence-studies (8.7 %, age-adjusted for year 1995). The low number of specific etiological dementia-diagnoses was embarrassing. The mean annual costs of institutional and nursing home care were 19583 USD, which was equivalent to earlier results. Compared to earlier epidemiological studies it may be interpreted that Finnish national care registers seem to be able to describe the prevalence of dementia, at least of a reasonable quantity. More detailed epidemiological studies will be carried out to validate these registers.

RÉSUMÉ FRANÇAIS

Les registres des soins administratifs de l’action sociale et de la santé finlandaise donnent la possibilité d’examiner les soins et les coûts des patients atteints de démence présénile au niveau de la population.