

## Day care for people with dementia: comparing experiences from Norway and Scotland

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#DARG17

BE THE DIFFERENCE

# Study aim

The study aimed to explore and compare the experiences of day care services for people with dementia as described by day care attendees and their family caregivers in Scotland and Norway.

Norwegian research funded by the Norwegian Research Council  
Scottish research funded by Alzheimer Scotland



# Background

- Specialist day care is provided in both countries
  - Scotland does not highlight day care as a focus in its national dementia strategy
  - Day care provision receives prominence in Norway's national plan.
- Benefits from day care attendance are reported in the literature for both people with dementia and their caregivers.



# Methods

- A qualitative cross-national comparative study was undertaken.
- Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 19 people with dementia and 15 caregivers in Scotland and 17 people with dementia and 17 caregivers in Norway.
- Qualitative data were analysed thematically and comparatively to explore the experiences of specialist day care and the outcomes people experience.



# Findings

- Positive outcomes from day care attendance for both people with dementia and caregivers
- Satisfaction with services related to
  - meaningful activities
  - getting out of the home
  - strengthening social connections
  - careful staff facilitation to create a positive and welcoming atmosphere.
- There were strong similarities in the experiences of people in the two countries.
- Some minor differences were noted relating to wider service structures and local cultures.



# From reluctance to acceptance and enjoyment

*I had a lot of scepticism to start with but I soon realised that this [day care] was something very good. My son gave me very strong advice to go there in the beginning when I strived against it. NAF*

## Codes:

NAF/M – Norwegian attendee female/male

SAF/M – Scottish attendee female/male

NCF/M – Norwegian family carer female/male

SCF/M – Scottish family carer female/male



# Positive aspects of the day

- The structure of the day care was reported as positive for attendees, the routine helps them settle and feel comfortable there. The routines were very similar in Scotland and Norway
- Food was another important aspect of the day

*We eat breakfast and talk ... it can take up to two hours .... we talk so much .... it is very pleasant! NAF*

*Because we see that she's eating a lot more sweet stuff at home, ..... and I think knowing that she's getting a decent meal three times a week as well. SCF*



# Activities that are familiar and meaningful

*It is nice when they help each other or do something useful like cooking or handwork... to be occupied by something of interest. Individual tailored activities are good, like when they took my mother to the shop. She was very pleased then. NCM*

*We walk down here in a group, all the way to the church and back ... That's alright, I have been doing that all my life ... so I enjoy it! NAM*

*I feel it's strange filling in your time throwing a ball across the room trying to hit a skittle, you know, and there isn't an awful lot of end product. SAF*



# Relationships are key

- Positive relationships between attendees and staff

*They speak to you, you can talk to them.... And they're nice, in here they're lovely people, you know. Everything is done for you, you know. It's great to think now you can be looked after like this, you know. SAM*

- Feelings of togetherness between attendees

*You know, we're all, sort of, on the one...you know, we're all happy together. SAF*



# Staff and carer relationships

*What I find is... it was just the fact that you were talking with someone that understood what you were saying..... just somebody to talk to. SCF*

- Contrast between Scotland and Norway

*There is no kind of communication between them and me. I would have liked that, now and then, to get some feed-back NCF*



# Improving relationships for families

*It gives him a break from me and it gives me a break from him.  
Then when he comes home I'm saying, have you had a good day?  
It gives you something else to talk about to each other. SCF*

*To be at home and just stepping on each other's toes all day long...  
that's not good. So I don't mind coming here [to day care] NAM*



# Outcomes for attendees

*She's really lost on the days that she's not here. SCF*

*My mother blossoms when she is there...Otherwise, she is not keen to get dressed or change clothes. NCF*

*The games, keep you busy, keep your brain going. SAF*

*I would not be like this [referring to cognitive strengths] if I didn't attend day care...I am almost certain of that. NAM*

# Respite and reassurance for carers

*It feels so good to know that my mother-in-law is in a place where she enjoys herself. I know that she is active and something nice is happening in her life from half past nine to half past two, Monday and Friday. NCF*

*because I think he's unsafe [at home], but I think it gives me peace of mind to go out. SCF*

*Yes, it's supposed to be my break and I should just drop her and go, but I stay for a while and sit with her and then I tend to just stay with them for a while and just get a chat, because it's just so nice and relaxed. SCF*



# Challenges

*Mum will sort of wait at the window and there's a rough idea of the time because obviously it depends who's picked up before and after and things, so Mum will sort of wait, which she finds tricky, the waiting. SCF*

*She doesn't understand that she is not going to the day care during week-ends. So, she makes herself ready and sits waiting and waiting for the bus to pick her up. Then she reacts kind of normal. She gets frustrated. NCF*



# Conclusions

- Specialist day care for people with dementia provides important support and care for people with dementia and respite and reassurance for their carers
- Day care promotes positive experiences and outcomes for people with dementia
- Day care should be seen as a key service for people with dementia and access to it enabled through policy and practice frameworks.

