

Wishes, expectations and plans for retirement among female healthcare employees

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The research question

Research question:

- 1): How do female healthcare employees experience their final years before retirement?*
- 2): What are their wishes, expectations and plans for retirement?*

Background

- The healthcare sector in Denmark is characterized by high rates of early retirement, recruitment problems and a high proportion of employees above 50 years
- Women retire earlier than men
- People with low education levels retire earlier than others

Retirement in Denmark

- The average age for retirement in Denmark is 60.9
- Forms of retirement
- Disability pension
- Early retirement pension (60-65)
- Pension/ superannuation (65)

Methods and sampling

- 13 qualitative in-depth interviews
- Women aged 56-63
- The informants work in residential homes and in home care
- 'Maximum variation sampling method' → informants of various marital status, seniority, managerial positions, with and without children and grandchildren, part time/ full time workers
- Focus: The women's subjective experiences and wishes for the future
- Differences and similarities across cases

How the women experience being healthcare employees

Positive aspects of the job:

- Good colleagues
- The caring for the elderly
- Respectability from being an employee

Negative aspects of the job:

- Stress
- Cut downs → many substitute workers
- Lack of influence
- Lack of time
- Lack of recognition and status

How the women experience being *older* healthcare employees

- They feel an increase in fatigue after work
- Ambivalent
- → Sometimes they are given extra job tasks

Differences and similarities regarding retirement

Differences:

- A fixed/ planned time for retirement
- An open time for retirement

Similarities:

- “A lonely choice”
- “The unpredictability of life”
- “Health is the most important, more than financial aspects”

Health is the most important – more important than money

- *...well, it doesn't help that they want to give economic compensation if you work longer. If I'm not well, what good is the extra money? (...) My point of view is, if I can work until I am 63, then it is fine. But if I can't, then it won't be the money that makes me do it... Because I am very concerned about my health, and how much pain I feel... (Frida 58)*

Special programs for the elderly employees?

- A great interest in a continued association to the workplace – among both the ones with an open and a planned/ fixed time for retirement
- Positive attitude towards special programs for older employees
- Great individual differences in regard to wishes for type of job accommodation
- **The informants agreed on the following points:**
- The programs must not have negative consequences for their younger colleagues.
- It must be a 'real' and not just a formal program
- None of them believes that such programs will ever be a reality in the elderly care sector

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Conclusion

- The study showed that there is a potential for retaining the elderly health care employees
- However that will require:
 - → More time for caring for the elderly
 - → Individually tailored programs for the older employees

Thank you!

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