

The „FamiLe“ Research Group

Family Health in Life Course

www.familiengesundheitimlebensverlauf.de

Location: Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences, Faculty of Business Management and Social Sciences

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Location: Witten/Herdecke University, Faculty of Health, Department of Nursing Science

Professors: Prof. Dr. Wilfried Schnepf (Speaker), Prof. Dr. Sabine Metzger
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Background

Families exercise a manifold influence on the health of its members. This may be in a positive way when the family takes on protective and sustaining functions, but can also be a risk for the family members in relation to their competences for preserving their health and to their coping potential. This awareness requires for good health care both professional and scientific discussions about the meaning, situation and role of the family in establishing and maintaining health in the various phases of life.

Research cooperation

Both at the University of Applied Sciences Osnabrück and at the Witten/Herdecke University it has been realized that empirically supported findings on the subject are essential in order, for instance, to build up subject-specific research in the healthcare professions. The cooperative research group „Family Health in Life Course – FamiLe“, funded since 2012 by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research, is carrying out a nursing and midwifery research project on the role of families in the context of health and disease. Two interdisciplinary teams in Osnabrück and Witten are working on the topic of family-oriented nursing and midwifery science.

Funding periods

As in the research projects of the first funding period (2012 – 2015), the 12 research projects of the second funding period (2015 – 2018) will be focusing on health behaviour during the family building phase, on coping with illness/care dependency in families, and on families coping with the last phase of life of one of its members. The „FamiLe“ research concept has been extended to include topics that are currently subjects of scientific discourse, such as the influence of social determinants on a family's health, or the Doing Family approach, which deals with familial everyday practices. Publications are ongoing and the first findings of the

second funding period were presented at a congress at the Witten/Herdecke University in October 2016. In May 2018 the research group will conclude its projects by organizing an international congress at the University of Applied Sciences in Osnabrück.

Qualifying concept

Intensive cooperation between both locations will promote the development of each individual research project dealing with family health. During this process the graduates will be supported by supervisor tandems from among the scientists involved. Two postdoctoral fellows will provide mentoring and every three months a research colloquium is to be held. The graduates and post-docs will be involved in both national and international research in which they will be supported by national and international experts, will visit congresses and take part in topic-oriented research abroad. Thus, the interdisciplinary research requirements will be fulfilled and a placement facilitated in the overall family health context.

Objectives

The research group „Family Health in Life Course – FamiLe“ would like first of all to gain in-depth knowledge about the role of the family in promoting health and in coping with illness and care dependency. Secondly, it is intended to promote the development and imparting of methodic competence to generate knowledge about familial processes and thirdly, to consolidate and advance the thematic field of family-oriented nursing and midwifery science at a high level. This includes the increasing internationalisation of research activities. Finally, the research group „Family Health in Life Course – FamiLe“ aims at supporting the consolidation of the scientific development of both disciplines and the professionalization of healthcare.

Children and adolescents

The experiences of families with a chronically ill child or adolescent in the process of migration

Katja Daugardt (M.Sc.N; Dipl. Berufspädagogin (FH))

When a child is chronically ill, the families are often confronted with huge challenges. There is already a certain amount of scientific knowledge about how families experience this situation. However, to date very little is known about those families from a foreign country who have brought a child suffering from a chronic illness with them to Germany. This qualitative study focuses on migrant families in which a child or adolescent with a chronic illness lives. Interviews based on the Grounded Theory are carried out with every family member, including the chronically ill children or adolescents. This doctoral thesis focuses on gaining insight into the experiences of migrant families with a chronically ill child or adolescent, and into how they cope. The individual phases of the migration process are taken into consideration.

The experiences of families with ventilator-dependent children and adolescents in the home

Sandra Falkson (M.Sc. Pflegewissenschaft; B.A. Pflegewissenschaft)

The subjective experiences of families with ventilator-dependent children and adolescents at home are the focus of this study. In this Grounded Theory study interviews are carried out with individual family members. The study's objective is to gain insight into the familial and personal situation in order to understand how the members of the family experience everyday life with the ventilator situation in the home, and how they interpret their experiences. A further objective is to find out more about the resources, needs and problems of these families.



Women and families in the context of birth and everyday family life

Experiences of women of very advanced age in the transition to motherhood

Karin Niessen (Dipl. Pflegepädagogin (FH))

Late motherhood is not a new phenomenon but is, however, an increasing one with particular challenges for the women. This research focuses on the experiences of middle-aged women in the transition to motherhood, centering on the importance of social and health aspects from the view of the women concerned. The study is based on qualitative interviews with women who have become mothers at the age of ≥ 40 years. It is intended to use the findings from this study to develop both promoting and preventive health measures.

Experiencing security during birth from the parent's perspective

Therese Werner-Bierwisch (Dipl. Pflegepädagogin (FH))

The security of mother and child is a quality characteristic of obstetric care. Seen from the view of the healthcare system, security serves above all to avoid or minimize risks. This research study focuses on how parents experience their own security during the birth process. The aim is to analyze how the security of both parents is constituted in the context of the birth. Based on qualitative interviews with parents, the knowledge gained should contribute to the development of a family-oriented healthcare.

Women's health in the context of reconciling career and family

Annika Bode (M.A. Management im Gesundheitswesen; B.Sc. Midwifery)

Combining career and family life is associated with challenges in both spheres of life and can have negative consequences on the health of working mothers. In this quantitative study, the health of mothers whose youngest child is aged between 12 and 36 months is assessed with the help of questionnaires. Special consideration is given to analyzing influencing factors at personal, familial and career levels. The findings should serve as basic recommendations for the improvement of women's health, taking internal and external resources into consideration.

Cooperative activities of free-lance midwives in Early Prevention Networks in Germany

Martina Schlüter-Cruse (Dipl. Berufspädagogin (FH))

Currently in Germany the cross-systems cooperation between professional groups in the health services and in child and youth welfare is being discussed as a central objective in the context of establishing Early Prevention support services. In the Early Prevention Networks, free-lance midwives are seen as important partners. This research project investigates the cooperation of free-lance midwives with other professional groups in the health and social welfare systems. The qualitative study is based on interviews with free-lance midwives in Germany. The results can be used to achieve a broad understanding of the cooperation of free-lance midwives in Early Prevention on the basis of the changing needs of women and families.

Extremely preterm infants on neonatal ICUs: the experiences of the parents and how they cope

Julia Söhngen (M.Sc.N; B.Sc.N)

The parents of extremely preterm infants are the focal point of this study. The aim is to determine the experiences and specific burdens of parents whose children are born extremely prematurely and are cared for on a neonatal intensive care ward. Participatory observations and guideline-supported interviews with parents of extremely preterm infants will be carried out, with the further aim of identifying and describing the coping strategies of the parents.

The family and chronic illness

Surviving sepsis – how families deal with the aftermaths of a severe sepsis

Riccardo Keßler (M.A. Soziologie; B.A. Soziologie, Philosophie)

Every year around 175,000 people in Germany are victims of a sepsis and the survivors generally have to fight for years against the aftermaths of the illness. It is of vital importance for an effective recovery from a sepsis that rehabilitation and aftercare should be improved. The study focuses on the experiences following the recovery from a sepsis, taking particular notice of how new challenges are dealt with. By performing extensive interviews with survivors and their families, a glimpse into the everyday, post-discharge life of sepsis survivors is expected. The objective is to make the findings available for constructing rehabilitation standards.

Insight into the lives of former young carers from their perspective as adults

Maren Roling (M.Sc. Pflegewissenschaft; B.A. Pflegewissenschaft)

This research focuses on the lives of former young carers from their perspective as adults, with particular focus on how they experience their familial situation and how that experience influences their present life. The study has a qualitative design based on the Grounded Theory in order to reconstruct the social reality of former young carers and to discover more about their needs, resulting in outlining the professional support required.

Social inequalities in the management of home care arrangements

Anna Möller (M.A. Management im Gesundheitswesen; B.A. Pflegewissenschaft)

In Germany, caregiving for someone at home is mostly in the hands of informal carers, i.e. relatives. To be able to take advantage of professional health care, considerable financial, social or cultural resources are required. This Grounded Theory study addresses the importance given to these resources in the management of home care arrangements and also the extent to which dependency on these resources results in social inequality. The findings can be used in the future to offer specific support for those families concerned.

New forms of family

The importance of family for homeless people with health problems but no shelter

Katharina Kapsch (M.Sc. Pflegewissenschaft; B.A. Pflegewissenschaft)

Due to their living conditions, homeless people have a higher risk of becoming acutely or chronically ill. Moreover, it seems the familial care relationships are restricted or non-existent. This qualitative Grounded Theory study therefore focuses on what importance the family has for homeless people, who assumes liability for family affairs and how professional carers can support these people. The findings gained contribute to deepening nursing knowledge.

New forms of partnership for couples confronted with chronic illness

Michaela Sorber (M.Sc. Pflegewissenschaft; B.A. Pflegepädagogik)

Confronted with a chronic illness, couples have to deal with many demands and changes in their relationship and often need to reconstruct their partnership. The aim of this doctoral thesis is to examine the impact of a chronic illness on couples' relationships and to analyse the various accompanying partnership constructions. In this Grounded Theory study, narrative interviews are carried out with partners who have experienced a chronic illness in their relationship. The objective is to gain knowledge about the diverse and alternative partnership constructions in relation to chronic illness.

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