

# The needs of people with dementia to enable 'ageing in place'

Exploring the process and outcomes of the needs assessment

## INTRODUCTION

This study is part of a practice-based research project, VitaDem, and explores the unmet needs of people with dementia (PWDs) and the assessment of these needs by case managers (CMs). VitaDem is focused on developing and implementing an integral, multi-component, need-driven and tailor-made approach with the goal of ageing in place.

Aim: To explore the unmet needs of PWDs and the assessment of these needs by CMs.

- ▶ Hajar Senhaji, MSc
- ▶ Hanny Groenewoud, PhD
- ▶ Netta van 't Leven, MSc
- ▶ Jacomine de Lange, PhD

Research Centre Innovations in Care, Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences, Rotterdam, the Netherlands

Website: [www.rotterdamuas.com/vitadem](http://www.rotterdamuas.com/vitadem)  
Email: [h.senhaji@hr.nl](mailto:h.senhaji@hr.nl)



*"And I love to play records. [...] I have plenty. [...] Cabinets full"*

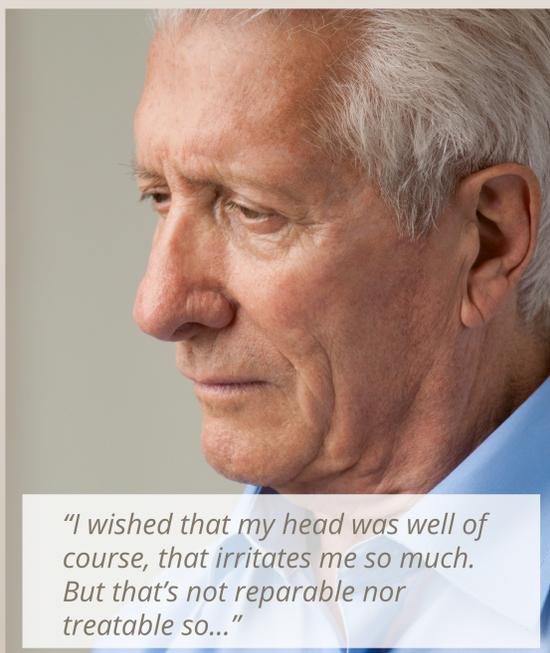
## METHODS

- ▶ Participants: 10 home-dwelling PWDs, age 65+; with diagnosis of dementia; living with informal caregiver in Capelle or Krimpen aan den IJssel, and assigned to a CM.
- ▶ Data: - Transcribed audiotapes of the needs assessment (semi-structured interviews) by CM;  
- CMs' summary of the needs assessment and goal setting for discussion with multidisciplinary team.
- ▶ Analysis: - Content analysis from transcribed needs assessments with Atlas.ti (version 7.5);  
- Comparison between needs expressed by PWDs and needs reported by CM.

## RESULTS

COMPARISON BETWEEN NEEDS EXPRESSED BY PWDS AND NEEDS REPORTED BY CM

- ▶ Needs that are brought up explicitly by PWDs are also often reported by the CM.
- ▶ Needs that are considered 'unresolvable' by PWDs themselves often are neglected by the CM.
- ▶ CMs tend to adopt explicit but general needs concerning 'Maintaining life as it is'.
- ▶ CMs describe specific activities, related to (former) hobbies, as needs without further exploration of the importance or meaning of these activities.



*"I wished that my head was well of course, that irritates me so much. But that's not reparable nor treatable so..."*

## DISCUSSION

- ▶ Active client involvement in the needs assessment process is important but challenging.
- ▶ Many PWDs are capable of pursuing their interests, making decisions about their health, and maintaining relationships.
- ▶ In some cases, the translation of difficulties in daily life into specific needs lacks.
- ▶ PWDs are very diverse in their expressed needs.
- ▶ Some needs are too general, implicit, or lack underlying meaning.
- ▶ A clearer grasp of the meaning of clients' needs by a CM would enable better addressing clients' real needs.

### NEEDS EXPRESSED BY PWDS

### EXAMPLES

Maintaining life as it is	Ageing at home with partner; keeping activities, like playing the piano, reading, or biking
Regaining independence	Choosing when and where to drive (car)
Improving physical health	Being able to take a walk without support (wheelchair)
Improving cognitive health	Not feeling chaotic in the head
Social connectedness, feeling of belonging	Being able to discuss things with other people
Improving mental health	Not worrying and feeling irritated during the night
To feel useful and appreciated	Helping with house chores and groceries
Understanding dementia	Understand why things are more difficult than before
Engaging in meaningful activities	Learning a new language, traveling, cooking

## IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

### DEEPER EXPLORATION AND RECOGNITION OF MEANING - IMPORTANCE - BARRIERS

- ▶ Assess the underlying meaning of 'unresolvable' needs (e.g. regaining drivers licence) to discuss alternative solutions suited to their capabilities.
- ▶ Specify and explore the meaning and importance of both explicit and implicit needs from PWD.
- ▶ Explore why a need is important for PWD and what barriers may exist to why this need is not met before.