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Background:

"Ageing-in-place" may improve elderly citizens' quality of life and the sustainability of welfare systems. In this process engaging family caregivers is crucial.

Methods:

A community-based participatory research in the remote area of Vallecmonica was enacted. First, we surveyed unmet needs of family caregivers. Then, a scoping literature review on existing interventions for engaging family caregivers was performed. Third, 4 co-design workshops were conducted to co-generate a new service. Finally, the service was piloted for a period of 6 months and evaluated.

Results:

51 caregivers participated in the survey: they were mainly females, mean 60 y.o and with medium-low level of education. The scoping review resulted in only 14 interventions targeted to elderly's caregivers in remote areas. The workshops involved 27 caregivers and co-designed a new psycho-social service (SOSCaregivers) articulated into: 1) a structured informative platform to facilitate health literacy and information seeking; 2) a tailored educational program focused on medical and practical aspects related to elderly care; 3) a set of peer-to-peer meetings for experience sharing and mutual support; 4) a "caregivers board" was created to lead the service. In the piloting 5 training sessions, 5 peer-to-peer meetings, 3 meeting with the "citizens board" were enabled.

Conclusions:

The service was positively received by caregivers, although participation wasn't high. Co-designing the service with its expected users facilitates the depth understanding of local people's needs and expectations. SOSCaregivers may support family caregivers of elderly citizens in hard to reach areas by both delivering more value and giving them an active role in the social-care network.

Key messages:

- Family caregivers' engagement is crucial for integrated and sustainable services in hard to reach communities.
- Co-designing the service with its expected users facilitates the Department understanding of local people's needs and expectations.

SosCaregivers: piloting of a psycho-social service for family caregiver in a hard-to-reach setting

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