

Title Specialized services for people with Alzheimer's disease: Literature review

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Aim

In Québec as elsewhere, efforts are being made to improve care and to meet as best as possible the needs of people affected by Alzheimer's disease and their caregivers in order to enable them to have a better quality of life. To implement the measures required to promote access to specialized services and continuity of care and to improve the quality of interventions, the MSSS asked INESSS to contribute to providing operational definitions for the structural entities that would need to be involved in offering the services to be deployed, namely, memory clinics, Alzheimer support centres, and teams specializing in behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia (BPSD).

Conclusions and results

An exhaustive, descriptive review of the literature and of government documents revealed that there is little information on the organizational structures of specialized services offered to people with Alzheimer's disease and to their caregivers. Some relevant information is nevertheless available from policy documents and descriptive studies of the health systems in Australia, France, the U.K., and Canada (Ontario and Québec). INESSS presents results from this literature review by the following types of structure: memory clinics, Alzheimer support centres and BPSD teams.

A disease as complex and prevalent as Alzheimer's must be considered a priority in Québec's health system, as it is in other countries such as Australia, France and the U.K., which have implemented public policies on this disease. In Québec, services are already being offered to affected people within existing structures. It would be desirable to maintain and enhance Québec's current resources or to create new ones, according to the different regions' needs, by integrating them into the current health service architecture, while respecting their hierarchy. Specific policies, guides and practice tools, based on the local and international experiences presented in this report, must be developed to ensure that standardized services are delivered in continuity in order to offer the best care to patients and caregivers and to meet the challenge raised by Alzheimer's disease.

Methods

INESSS performed an exhaustive, critical descriptive review of relevant documents on the three service structures mentioned above and focused on the specialized services offered in several countries that met specific criteria, including Canada. Some information available in Québec is also presented.

Further research/reviews required

Considering the magnitude of Alzheimer's disease and the paucity of the literature on the organizational structures of specialized services for people with this disease and their caregivers, high-quality research on the organization of specialized services is needed in order to develop integrated care models meeting the needs of this clientele.

Written by

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