

Prerequisites for empowerment: a study of procurement documents for the provision of care in Swedish nursing homes

Tomas Lindmark, Cecilia Ingard & Sven Trygged

Faculty of Health and Occupational Studies, Department of Social Work and Criminology, University of Gävle, Sweden



European Journal of Social Work <https://doi.org/10.1080/13691457.2022.2115017>

Background

- ❑ **New Public Management Reforms** – incentives for competition among nursing home providers, increased for-profit ownership, subcontracting of nursing homes (Harrington et al., 2017; Meagher, Szebehely & Meagher, 2013).
- ❑ **Procurement documents**
- ❑ **Nordic eldercare:** decreased universalized care, deterioration in working conditions and increased ill-health for care workers (Meagher, Szebehely & Meagher, 2013; Moberg, 2017; Szebehely & Meagher, 2018; Trydegård, 2012)
- ❑ The Swedish Social Services Act (SoL, 2001:453) mandates that eldercare provide a reasonable standard of living and **equality in living conditions**.
- ❑ **Working Conditions:** A prerequisite for quality of care among older adults (Engström et al., 2020; White et al., 2019).

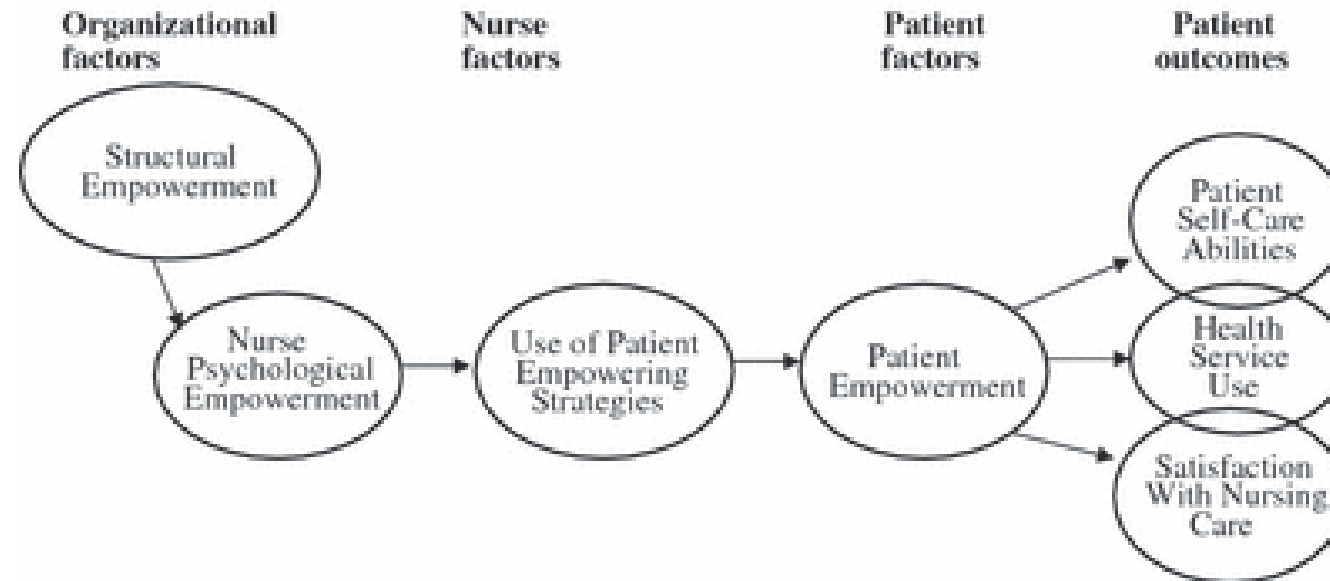
Aim and research questions

The aim of the study was to investigate the prerequisites for empowering both care recipients and caregivers in Swedish nursing homes.

1. What considerations for **empowering** care recipients are specified in procurement documents?
2. What considerations for **empowering** caregivers are specified in procurement documents?
3. Are there **differences** between the conditions for care recipients and caregivers specified in the municipalities' procurement documents and, if so, what do these differences indicate in terms of the objective of **equality**?

Theoretical framework for Empowerment

Expanded nurse–patient empowerment model
(Laschinger, 2002)

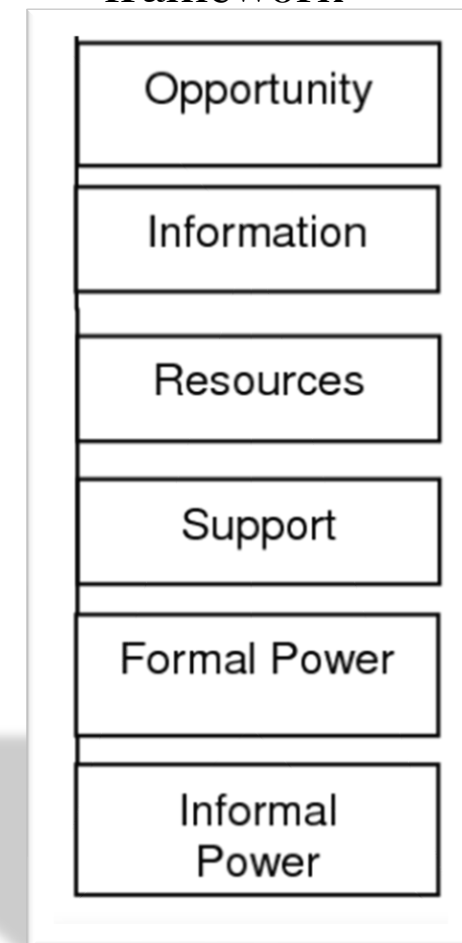


Towards a comprehensive theory of nurse/patient empowerment: applying Kanter's empowerment theory to patient care. Laschinger et al., 2010

Method

- ❑ 7 procurement documents from three Swedish municipalities ("Smalltown," "Midtown," "Bigtown"), varying in size (number of inhabitants), with attachments.
- ❑ 20–40 pages outlining the stated conditions and assessment criteria for proposals submitted by providers.
- ❑ Analysis conducted using Laschinger et al. (2010) theoretical framework for empowerment.

Empowerment
framework



Results: resident empowerment

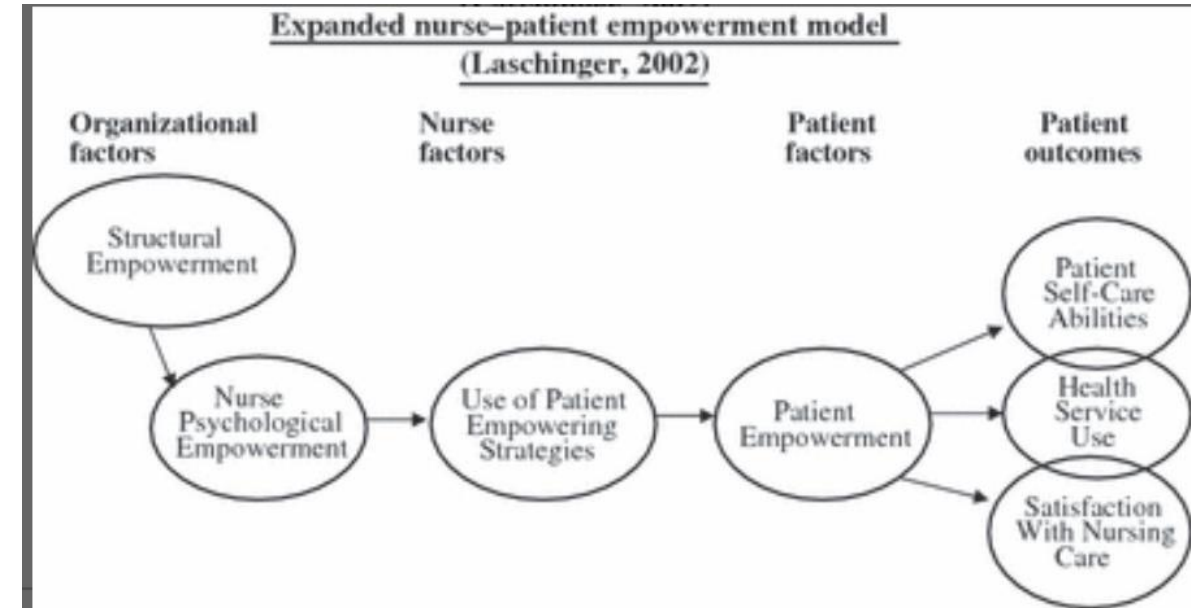
- ❑ The procurement documents stipulate that care recipients must have opportunities to express their views on the care and rights to privacy and self-determination.
- ❑ A person-centred care and a humanistic approach, as all individuals have the same value
- ❑ A rehabilitation approach that strengthens the care recipients' capabilities, autonomy, and independence, using technological aids if needed.
- ❑ Good relationships with relatives.
- ❑ Give care recipients opportunities to join activities in line with their interests.
- ❑ Allow care recipients to influence what they want to eat.

Results: Staff empowerment

- ❑ The procurement documents placed multiple demands on the caregivers but barely touched on staff empowerment.
- ❑ A few mentions of access to information, growth opportunities, and formal power in context with work environment regulations
- ❑ Disparity in stated management support for caregivers: Smalltown and Midtown had explicit support requirements; Bigtown did not.
- ❑ **The municipalities differed in how the providers competed to win the procurement.**

Conclusions

- ❑ **Care Recipients:** Emphasis on their empowerment.
- ❑ **Staff Issues:** Lack of focus on empowerment or well-being; residents' empowerment linked to staff.
- ❑ **Municipality Strategies:** Varied grading strategies of procurement documents. This likely reflects different quality standards despite nationwide policies calling for equality in care.
- ❑ **Evaluation Challenges:** Difficult to assess and follow up (Blomqvist & Winblad, 2022; Isaksson et al., 2018); potential need for more empowerment or tougher regulations?



Ongoing studies

- First-line managers working situation and procurement documents
- Relatives view on empowerment and human rights in nursing homes
- Staff members' psychosocial work environment under different nursing home ownership types
- Staff members' experiences of moral stress when working with empowering the residents

Thank you for listening!



Painted by Cecilia Ingard

For questions, inquiries
or feedback – feel free to
e-mail either of us at:

Cecilia.Ingard@hig.se

Tomas.Lindmark@hig.se

References

- Blomqvist, P., & Winblad, U. (2022). Contracting out welfare services: how are private contractors held accountable? *Public Management Review*, 24(2), 233–254. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2020.1817530>
- Engström, M., Högberg, H., Strömberg, A., Hagerman, H., & Skytt, B. (2020). Staff Working Life and Older Persons' Satisfaction With Care: A Multilevel, Correlational Design. *Journal of Nursing Care Quality*, 36(1), E7–E13. <https://doi.org/10.1097/NCQ.0000000000000463>
- European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, (2021). Long-term care report: trends, challenges and opportunities in an ageing society. Volume II, Country profiles, Publications Office. <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2767/183997>
- Harrington, C., Jacobsen, F. F., Panos, J., Pollock, A., Sutaria, S., & Szebehely, M. (2017). Marketization in Long-Term Care: A Cross-Country Comparison of Large For-Profit Nursing Home Chains. *Health services insights*, 10. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1178632917710533>
- Isaksson, D., Blomqvist, P., & Winblad, U. (2018). Privatization of social care delivery—how can contracts be specified? *Public Management Review*, 20(11), 1643–1662. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2017.1417465>
- Laschinger, S. H.K., Smith, G. S. & Leslie, K. (2010). Towards a comprehensive theory of nurse patient empowerment: Applying Kanter's empowerment theory to patient care. *Journal of Nursing Management*, 18(1), 4–13. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2834.2009.01046.x>
- Meagher, G., Szebehely, M., & Meagher, E. G. (2013). Stockholm Studies in Social Work 30 Marketisation in Nordic eldercare: a research report on legislation, oversight, extent and consequences. <http://www.normacare.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Marketisation-in-nordic-eldercare-webbversion-med-omslag1.pdf>
- Moberg, L. (2017). Marketization in Swedish Eldercare : Implications for Users, Professionals, and the State [Doctoral dissertation, Uppsala University]. DiVA. <http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:uu:diva-319504>
- Måqvist, I., Åborg, C., & Forsman, M. (2011). Styrformer och arbetsförhållanden inom vård och omsorg – en kunskapssammanställning om New Public Management.
- Szebehely, M., & Meagher, G. (2018). Nordic eldercare – Weak universalism becoming weaker? *Journal of European Social Policy*, 28(3), 294–308. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0958928717735062>
- Trydegård, G. B. (2012). Care work in changing welfare states: Nordic care workers' experiences. *European Journal of Ageing*, 9(2), 119–129. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10433-012-0219-7>
- Vrangbæk, K., Petersen, O. H., & Hjelmar, U. (2015). Is Contracting Out Good or Bad for Employees? A Review of International Experience. *Review of Public Personnel Administration*, 35(1), 3–23. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0734371X13511087>
- White, E. M., Aiken, L. H., & McHugh, M. D. (2019). Registered Nurse Burnout, Job Dissatisfaction, and Missed Care in Nursing Homes. *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*, 67(10), 2065–2071. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jgs.16051>