

Key figures

Across the OECD, the proportion of the population **aged 80 and over** is predicted to increase **from 4%** in 2010 **to almost 10%** by 2050.

What is the issue?

Social interaction and loneliness in healthcare and older adults' care settings is the focus of much contemporary research and public policy. Social interaction and loneliness impact the quality of life of patients, older adults, families, carers and workers. This includes their ability to progress and the performance of organisations across the public, private and not-for-profit sectors. However, the literature and discourse on healthcare and older adults' care points increasingly to:

- a care deficit, both in funding and in human terms, with insufficient carers available to provide the right type and level of care to those who need it
- the healthcare sector faces funding challenges across the world at a time when many populations are ageing rapidly and the dependency ratio is falling

What research did the Sodexo Institute for Quality of Life do?

In September 2014, the Institute held a round-table 'Dialogue' in Ottawa with experts from Canada and the US to understand better social interaction and loneliness from a quality of life perspective with regard to:

- emotions
- the changing profile of carers
- taking care with technology

What did we learn?

From the perspective of the patient or older adult, loneliness may be experienced in parallel with a number of related emotions such as aggression, stress or feelings of loss of autonomy.

In carers, the emotions that are most likely to help mitigate loneliness in others are compassion and empathy, though carers also have needs that must be managed both for their own progress and the performance of their organisation.

Owing to unprecedented demographic shifts, the profile of carers is changing significantly and will continue to do so.

Taking care with technology opens up a range of possibilities to enhance care communities with social networks and the unprecedented availability of data. However, these possibilities are balanced by the very essence of the notions of loneliness and social interaction that still have contact between people at their core.

Find out more by reading the full report: 'Social interaction, loneliness and Quality of Life in healthcare and older adults' care'.

About the Institute

As an in-house 'think-tank', the Sodexo Institute for Quality of Life is inspired by Sodexo's deeply held conviction that improving Quality of Life leads to the progress of individuals and contributes to the performance of organisations. Its role is to gather and develop insight to help Sodexo understand better what are the levers of Quality of Life.

QualityofLifeInstitute@sodexo.com

www.sodexo.com