

Marketisation of elder care in Scandinavia – better and cheaper services?

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The aim of this paper is to investigate the prevalence and consequences of marketization in Scandinavian elder care in regards to quality of care, working conditions and economy. The finding is that the three countries of Denmark, Norway and Sweden have applied marketization to a varied degree.

There is no clear evidence in regards to quality outcomes: there is some indication that private for-profit providers perform better in regards to processual and outcome quality factors such as involving the user, and that public providers perform better in regards to structural quality factors, such as having more staff per user employed. There are indications of poorer working conditions for members of staff following contracting out. Finally, there are inconclusive indications regarding the economic savings, not least because transition costs are rarely included in the analyses, nor are the costs of the many bankruptcies that especially occur in home care. The paper is a meta-review of recently published research and grey literature, including systematic studies but also case studies.