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Qualitative study on the knowledge about gifted seniors

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Abstract

This report has been commissioned by dr. Noks Nauta, on behalf of the Gifted Adult Foundation (Instituut Hoogbegaafdheid Volwassenen, IHBV). The purpose of this research is to gather insight into the existing knowledge and the needs of professionals who work with the elderly, by qualitative research methods. The eventual goal of this research is to improve the living conditions of gifted seniors through corporation between these professionals and the Gifted Adult Foundation. The central research question is as follows:

What is the existing knowledge of professionals working with the elderly about gifted seniors and what might these professionals need in terms of knowledge and skills regarding this topic?

In order to answer this question, five interviews were conducted with key-informants who work with the elderly. The interviews revealed a diverse portrait. It turns out that the existing knowledge of giftedness is specifically targeted on children. Less is known about gifted adults and seniors. Some of the interviewed professionals thought of one or more of their clients when asked about this topic. On the one hand the professionals do have an interest in this topic, while on the other hand they say they have no desire for, nor need of specific knowledge and skills regarding gifted elders. Surely, in their profession they always offer custom services to an individual and that person's needs. Furthermore they see very little in separate diagnostics and treatment-options for gifted elders (for instance in the context of dementia). Regardless, one of the respondents seems to have an interest in more knowledge about distinct diagnostics and treatment while the other professionals also displayed a certain degree of interest.

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