



Call for Proposals: Disparities in health care among the very old - What are the findings from other countries with aging populations?

1. About the „Public Health Impact Analysis (PHIA) Working Group“:

The working group "Public Health Impact Analysis (PHIA)" at the RKI generates evidence concerning urgent and relevant public health challenges. This is done through a range of activities, including program evaluation, evidence synthesis, and statistical modeling techniques. The PHIA Working Group is opening a call for a systematic evidence synthesis to investigate social and regional disparities in health care for the very old in countries with large aging populations. "Healthy aging" is a major interdepartmental area of research for the RKI, as highlighted in the "RKI 2025" strategy document. Through this project, PHIA aims to facilitate the synthesis of policy-relevant knowledge on this topic while strengthening corresponding research and policy networks.

2. Idea, Background and Rationale of the Project:

The number of very old people (people over the age of 80) is increasing substantially as a result of demographic aging. In the 80+ age group, certain health problems, such as multimorbidity, frailty, dementia and need for long-term care, occur much more often than in earlier phases of life. These age-specific health problems pose particular challenges to health care delivery. Since women have a higher life expectancy, they make up a majority of the very old population. In addition, there are many women in this age group who live alone. These gender aspects are important for all health care sectors but particularly for nursing care.

Germany is not the only country with an old and aging population, as Austria, Italy, Japan and Spain, for example, show similar demographic dynamics. This project aims to identify regional and social differences in health care from a worldwide perspective in order to derive potential for improvement in Germany.

3. Objectives of the Project:

The project seeks to compile evidence for social and regional inequalities in the health care of the very old, considering gender differences, for various countries with rapidly aging populations, in an area of health care to be proposed by the contractor (such as, for example, outpatient care, inpatient care, day care, rehabilitation care), and to evaluate any particular measures that may have been taken, if



applicable. The project will generate a scientific report as a basis for creating a publication for submission to a scientific journal.

4. Methods:

In this project, evidence will be generated through a scoping review by an external contractor.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria:

- Study types: Observational studies and reviews.
- Language: Studies published in English and in the external contractor's language.
- Study location: The systematic study search considers studies conducted in countries with a rapidly aging population similar to Germany, for example Austria, Italy, Japan and Spain.

Search methods to identify studies:

- Searches will be conducted in the following international electronic databases: Ovid Medline, Embase, Scopus, PubMed, as well as adequate national electronic databases.
- An additional search of the grey literature, but exclusively project reports, is planned.

The method of data extraction will be agreed upon and piloted with the corresponding units and the contractor.

5. Core Tasks and Scope of Work:

The contractor will work closely with the HIA scientists for the duration of the project. Joint activities of the contractor and the RKI will include (not necessarily in the order listed):

- Development of a protocol for the scoping review.
- Finalization of inclusion and exclusion criteria.
- Development of a search strategy.
- Agreement of an appropriate data extraction tool.
- Agreement of an appropriate data synthesis procedure.
- Agreement on the outline of the report.
- Joint working meetings.

The contractor will take the lead for the activities listed below:

- Conducting the search strategy: searching relevant bibliographic databases and grey literature, and identifying all documents that meet the inclusion criteria.
- Presentation of search results in a PRISMA flowchart.
- Title/abstract screening.
- Locating and obtaining full-text documents for possible inclusion.
- Full-text screening.
- Extraction of relevant information and data from included studies.



- Creation of a report.

6. Deliverables:

- Study protocol.
- One final report containing a summary highlighting the main findings, sent to the project lead, Dr. Claudia Hövener, as well as to Enno Nowossadeck and Dr. Judith Fuchs, in PDF-format.
- A digital copy of all documents, including analysis code, created in fulfillment of this contract will be required by Enno Nowossadeck at the end of the work.

7. Lines of Communication:

- The contractor will report to Enno Nowossadeck and designated scientists from RKI.
- The contractor will engage closely with designated scientists from RKI.

8. Quality Improvement Measures:

- The contractor shall adhere to good practice guidelines, in particular regarding good research practice, as well as to guidelines appropriate to the type of review conducted.
- The contractor must inform RKI staff responsible for this project about risks to deadlines as soon as those risks are identified.
- Payments will be contingent upon the quality of deliverables assessed by RKI staff according to the requirements listed under “Core Tasks and Scope of Work”.

9. Time Frame:

- Start date: Date of contract placement.
- End date: Four months after the date of contract placement. All deliverables must be completed by this date.
- Approval Process: All deliverables must go through the RKI approval procedures before final approval. As this process can take at least two weeks, we expect the contractor to consider the RKI internal clearance in their schedule and propose measures to mitigate the risk of not meeting the final deadline.



10. Essential and desirable Experience / Qualifications:

Essential:

- Proven expertise in conducting health-related (Scoping) reviews.
- Demonstrated experience in critical assessment of evidence (e. g., GRADE).

Desirable:

- Previous national and international work or research experience on: aging populations, public health, scoping review, health care.

Language requirement:

- Expert knowledge in English (written and oral communication).
- Ability to analyze literature in English, and at least one other WHO official language.

11. Evaluations of the Applications:

Two aspects of the applications will be evaluated:

- 1) The budget and its justifications will be evaluated with 40% of the grade.
 - (a) Budgets exceeding 40,000 euros will not be accepted.
- 2) The remaining 60% of the total grade will be evaluated based on the following criteria: Methodology, timeline, previous experience and review team, as described in the application.

12. Applications:

Applications will be submitted as two PDF documents and should include the following elements:

The first document, which should be no more than five pages, includes:

- The study project including a title, an outline of the study protocol, a proposed methodology, a time frame, and deliverables.
- A cover letter justifying the suitability of the applicant's profile for this specific call.
- A budget (in Euros) presenting a breakdown of expenses and a payment plan.

The second document includes:

- The individual CVs of the research group with a list of relevant publications.
- An example of previous work relevant to this call/topic.



The complete application, including the title / acronym of the systematic review should be sent to Dr. Benjamin Barnes (BarnesB@rki.de) by August 01, 2022 Berlin local time.

Important Notes:

- This is a fee-for-service contract. Contractors must agree to the Contract Terms of the RKI (https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/Service/Ausschreibung/vertragsbedingungen.pdf?__blob=publicationFile).
- All applicants will be informed about the outcome of the selection process, but no individual feedback will be provided regarding unsuccessful applications.
