How can a good return be used for prevention?

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Missing persons

To go missing or lost and be the object of a search operation can be a traumatic experience with remaining worries and questions from the former missing individuals, their relatives, care professionals and police officers.

It is not unusual that the individual goes missing again. Prevention, preparedness and a more systematic closure of search operations, including coordination of societal support for the individual, could mean improved quality of life for the individual and prevention of repeated search operations.

In both cases the societal costs could be reduced.
Introduction – the voices

“If I just hadn’t looked away in those 10 sec….” (Relative)

“What if they hadn’t found me?” (Missing and found person)

“Normally I can stop her before she gets to far but this time … ” (Relative)

“Now everyone is worried about if I should get lost again” (Missing and found person)

“It was so embarrassing” (Missing and found person)

“We are constantly thrown between sorrow and hope” (relative)

“Its frustrating, but I don’t have the right to tell them where their son is… after ten years…” (Police officer)
The Search for Missing Persons in Sweden - background

- 10 million people in Sweden
- 25,000 disappearances reported to the Police
- 9000 prio 1-2
- > 600 SAR missions based on the Act of Accident Protection (Mountain SAR + search for missing persons in other cases EFP)
- NGO:s Mountain Rescue, Missing People Sweden, Home Guard, others....
- Phase 1 Search when life’s at risk, grave danger, phase 2 investigation.
- Persons with dementia and/or psychiatric illnesses. Both groups are increasing in society
- >130,000 have dementia, 5% are over 80 years old, expected to double in 2034. About 25% are found in bad condition and 10% found dead*
- 170,000 have psychiatric illnesses

*Of persons object to SAR missions
Our pilot study

Aimed at mapping out the field of Search for Missing Persons in Sweden (EFP) according to both the actors and the process:

1. Research overview, 2. national statistics, 3. voices and experiences

Challenges - Where are the challenges and developmental factors? With a special attention to collaboration and leadership

International contacts, dialogue about education, networking...

The focus group in Jönköping

New routines...

The Safe Return Project

Less re-disappearances
METHODS

- Persons with dementia/Depression/Psyciatric illness/etc.
- Statistics from the Police
- Scooping literature review
  - International
  - Nordic
  - Swedish
- Explorative In-depth interviews
  - Relatives to persons with dementia
  - Missing and found persons
- Document study
- Focus groups interview

Representatives from Swedish Police, Municipal care of older persons, persons with different functional variations
METHODS

Qualitative design
Exploratory study

Adults like Persons with dementia/
Depression/ Psychiatric illness/ etc.

Statistics from the Police

Scooping literature review
• International
• (Swedish)

Document study
• life stories
• care plans

In-depth interviews
• Relatives to persons with dementia
• Missing and found persons

Representatives from Swedish Police,
Municipal care of older persons,
persons with different functional variations

Focus groups interview
Action research study
Networking
Voices & Experiences – living with a person with dementia

• “Today, all of my time is going to take care of M. I can’t leave her, if she falls she want call for help... She is restless. Thai’s probably what has led to this escapes. Even thou her walking is slow, she is able to disappear very quick”

• ”Then it was 2017...then she disappeared in the afternoon. I made the mistake, I look in our own property first, I should have checked the road first...I lost a few minutes on this. I called the Police sincee it was cold and reiny this day. Even the Police realiced, you couldnt just sit down and wait. There where several Policemen...Facebook...dogs and even a helicopter.”

• I was woken up at 2 o´clock in the night (by a relative). She (M) had been found under a bush, she had fallen and couldn’t get up and didn’t called for help... One of the Policemen had went back on his own...She had been missing för 10-11 hours”

• The Police contacted Missing People. I don´t know about how they organized the work since I was told to stay in my house. This (the missing situation) became extremly public.

(Husband of women with dementia)
The focus group

• “There is no prevention...no routine...” (Manager LSS)
• “We have a routine...but action starts first when someone is reported missing...” (Manager ÄO)
• “The Police needs more information of the person... if we let the person who is missing, move away 2 km instead of 1 km, the area to search is four doubled... Time factor is crucial!” (Police)
• “It might be better for the person that it is we (the care givers) who are the one who is there to pick up when someone is found” (Manager LSS)
• “In general, the Police won’t contact the Social Care – what if we could have ‘one entrance’ to the municipality in cases like this– a contact Centre” (Police)

New routines are initiated, inspired by the Herbert Protocol!
Who’s problem?

• Lack of knowledge in the municipalities: – A suburban municipality with 90,000 citizens: *We don’t have that kind of problems here. In reality 86 police search missions 2018.*

• No time, no money, not our responsibility - rescue has generally low priority compared to healthcare, schools...

• Today it is an assignment and cost for the Police, NGO’s and a problem for the most vulnerable and their relatives, both the risk of going missing, going missing and when the person is found - dead or alive, or not found at all.

Compare with the average total *societal* cost in Sweden for a rescue of a drowning person in middle age including prehospital-, and hospital care and loss of income 30 655 BP *

*The Contingencies agency 2013*
The Project “Safe Return”

• “I rather stayed in the wild than was so exposed and ashamed”

• Ease the suffering and save societal costs by better coordination of operations in the closure of a search (get the role of out of office social services back to the social services)

• By using the county rescue service’s dispatch centrals for informing the municipality’s officer in charge about the search and found (or not found, or found dead) person.

• Use already existing structurers and communication channels, no extra costs

• Developmental Project between the Police, Region Stockholm, Rescue services in the region, dispatch centrals in the region and several municipalities

• Documentation of results by the participants, evaluation by CARER and the participants
Picture of the "Safe Return project"

- Police closing the search
- Information to the municipality about their citizen - possible need of support, home help service etc.

Police: regional leadership central

Rescue services dispatch centrals
- Get the information from the Police.
- Phone officer on standby duty in the municipality

Officer in municipality
- Receive information
- Decide who to pass it on to.
- Record the information and what is done with the information
How ”Safe Return” can be used for preparenes and prevention (still with minimal costs)

- No Swedish research
- "Basic" statistics

International research

- Herbert Protocol
- Checklists
- Prepare for disappearances
- Stop re-disappearances

No motivation

Interviews

- Relatives
- Former missing

- Police closing the search
- Information to the municipality about their citizen - possible need of support, home help service etc

Police, regional communication center

- Get the information from the Police.
- Phone officer on stand by duty in the municipality

Rescue services dispatch centrals

- Receive information
- Decide who to pass it on to
- Record the information and what is done with the information

Officer in municipality

Structure
Actuality
Interest
Motivation
Further research priorities/gaps identified:

• Process perspective: before – during – after a missing episode

• What kind of collaboration between actors in SAR do really work concerning missing persons? Is shared organization objectives reasonable?

• How can cross sector collaboration in this field be developed and supported technically and legally?

• What kind of support/care/education is needed to be developed for relatives?

• Similarities and dissimilarities between different countries and various “categories” of missing persons? Comparative statistics
Thank you for your attention!
Welcome to be in touch!

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CARER
CENTER FOR ADVANCED RESEARCH IN EMERGENCY RESPONSE

• 50/50 Linkoping University
• and the Contingencies Agency
• Interdisciplinary action research
• 3 faculties, 11 departments, 7 doctoral students: Organizing, Informatics and Logistics, Systems & Tecniques development, Disaster Medicine
• Most projects in collaboration between at least two disciplines and empirical partners
• Empirical partners: Authorities, rescue services, Police, SAR-administration, Prehospital care, SOS Alarm AB, NGO:s

Center for Advanced Research in Emergency Response
Centre for Welfare Studies (CVS)

Possibilities and challenges of the modern welfare society and its control, organization and management to contribute to a sustainable welfare society, both for those who govern, lead, and work in different welfare services as well as for those in need these services.

Regional and national development by knowledge development in the welfare sector.