

# RESEARCH PAPER: INNOVATION IN ELDERLY CARE (GERMANY)

## SUMMARY:

### A) CONCEPTS OF LIVING

*Detailed profiles with examples below.*

- The German care insurances are financing several models of elderly living / care that are innovative:
  - **Housing for Help** is a concept that mediates housing partnerships between young and old people. Students get a cheap room, senior citizens get help in everyday life by the student. This excludes tasks such as nursing or medical services of any kind, which are financed separately by the insurance.
  - **Care flatshare** is an option that is often organised by relatives of elderly people with dementia. Three to twelve persons in need of care live together in one large apartment, a *presence person*, is in charge of organisational, care or community life supporting activities and provides support in housekeeping. Outpatient care is organised separately. The care insurance fund provides start-up financing of up to EUR 10,000 for this purpose.
  - **Pensioner flatshare** are available as private or agency-supported alternatives: best agers set up a residential community on the basis of their own initiative, people with increased care needs join special, assisted living communities for senior citizens. Popular and widespread are also the so-called **dementia flatshares**.
  - **Multi-generational living** is considered an intergenerational project in which young and old live together in the same building complex. These projects include units for people in need of care. The focus is on the coexistence of different generations in one building and builds up upon the conscious coexistence, mutual assistance and care. The residents organise themselves in registered residents' associations', which they join as members. The projects may be set up by relatives founding a cooperative, cooperatives that belong to social services organisations or private agencies.

As a part of **multi-generational living** inclusive, cross-generational housing projects do exist all over Germany. E.g. Villa anders (Cologne) is open to lesbians, gays and transgender people, who are interested in discrimination-free living and claims to be the first project of its kind in Germany (2009). Further research found many more projects of this kind in Germany. E.g. an inclusive, cross-generational housing project for women-loving women and queer people, which offers affordable, discrimination-free and barrier-free living space and enables its residents to live a self-determined, dignified life until old age.

- Fundamentally all of the picked out options above are based on a financing of the care insurance companies. On the one hand citizens receive benefit amounts of the nursing/ care insurance funds based on the identified "care level". On the other hand the options may receive *start-up funding* for restructuring measures of flats and houses. The start.up funding is decided on a case to case basis and granted by the respective Land / City.

## B) ALTERNATIVE TREATMENTS/ OFFERS/ IDEAS

*Detailed profiles with examples below.*

- **Yoga practices** found their way into classical care, residential homes, nursing homes as early as 2000. It is also called Chair Yoga or Soft Yoga and Yoga institutions adapted to the development by offering supplemental courses for Yoga teachers, who want to offer services to residential homes.
- **Ayurveda**, as the science of long life, offers methods of geriatric care and describes in detail the pattern of sequential loss of biological strength with age. The method does not seem to be very widespread and has not been applied nationwide. It remains a niche therapy for now.
- **QiGong** as a part of Chinese medicine that is taught to bring body and mind into harmony does not seem to be very widespread *or* has not become generally accepted. In Germany, apparently the most famous representative of the method is Divyam de Martin-Sommerfeldt (55) from Hamburg, who developed a method that should make Qigong possible for seniors. He called it "Chinese fit in old age", CFA for short. However the method didn't have a breakthrough like Yoga did at the end of the 90s.
- **"Digital angels"** for older people: The mobile team of advisors - the Digital Angels - of Germany Secure in the Internet e.V. offers support, especially to older people, on specific questions concerning digitalisation. The Digital Angels also stop at multi-generational houses with their Infomobile and are financed by the Federal Ministry of Family Affairs.
- **Robots** could soon be used in German nursing homes to entertain residents with music and pantomime or to instruct them in movement exercises such as Tai Chi. Robot "Pepper" has been programmed by computer scientists from the University of Siegen, which also intends to stimulate a social discussion about the use of robots in nursing care. In Japan, the human-like robot is already on the market and entertains senior citizens, for example, with Tai Chi or guessing games. (Also because the population in Japan is extremely over-aged, more machines are to take over support tasks there. For example, a robot seal with cuddly fur, a kind of pet substitute for old people's homes, has been in use for some time.)

## A) CONCEPTS OF LIVING

### 1. Housing for Help/ Homeshare/ „Wohnen für Hilfe“ (WfH)

- Idea:** Free or low-cost accommodation in exchange for help in the household.
- The project mediates housing partnerships between young and old. Students get a cheap room, senior citizens get help in everyday life.
- The **concept is being extended** to other people that need help too: families, single parents and people with disabilities.<sup>1</sup>
- Concept:** The exchange is discussed individually, rules are determined in a contract between the student and the recipient of help.
- Tasks of students may include: mowing the lawn, going shopping, cooking together, cleaning tasks. Excluded tasks: nursing or medical services of any kind.<sup>2</sup>
- Background:** The idea for the exchange originally came from London. Under the term "Homeshare", many shared flats were already formed in the 1980s, especially in London, where rents are extremely high.
- Darmstadt was a pioneer in Germany: " Housing for Help" began there as early as 1992, followed by Munich, then Berlin, Frankfurt and Freiburg. Until 2005 in Munich, for example, a total of 160 housing partnerships have developed since then, with a social worker arranging the contacts. Every second housing provider was over 80 years old, most of them single.
- Apart from the seniors and students, there is also a third profiteer: the state hopes to be able to avert the impending nursing care crisis. The project is an example of how to make the welfare state fit for the future.<sup>3</sup>
- Organisation:** More than 30 German cities participate in the project.<sup>4</sup> Numbers vary: roughly 20 Student Services Organisations (Studentenwerke)<sup>5</sup> are involved in the organisation<sup>6</sup>, other information states there would be about 40 agencies for housing for assistance in Germany.
- While in Cologne, Freiburg or Würzburg the complex mediation is free of charge, in Munich students have to pay a registration fee of three euros and, if the mediation is successful, 25 euros each from the involved parties.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.studentenwerke.de/de/content/wohnen-f%C3%BCr-hilfe>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.studentenwerke.de/de/content/wohnen-f%C3%BCr-hilfe>

<sup>3</sup> <https://taz.de/1610092/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.br.de/fernsehen/ard-alpha/sendungen/campus/wohnen-fuer-hilfe-senioren-studenten-wg-100.html>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.studentenwerke.de/de/content/wohnen-f%C3%BCr-hilfe>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.studentenwerke.de/de/content/wohnen-f%C3%BCr-hilfe>

In Starnberg the same service costs 75 Euro for the landlord and 50 Euro for the tenant. However, some key data are common to all projects under the umbrella of "Housing for Help“:

At the beginning of the mediation process: detailed written self-declaration and extensive interviews are required. This way the project managers try to find out which candidates among the seniors and students would harmonise best with each other. The more honest and open the information, the better the chances of finding the right flat share partner.

Outline:

- One hour help per square meter of living space per month.
- The tenant covers the utility costs.
- Trial period of 4 weeks.
- Rental period of at least one year.
- The statutory period of notice applies (furnished rooms two weeks to the end of the month, unfurnished rooms or granny flat three months to the end of the month).
- No medical care services.
- Written contract.<sup>7</sup>

**Online Services:**

e.g.

<https://www.mitwohnen.org/>

<http://www.lebens-wg.net/>

**Example:**

In Munich, students are bombarding the senior citizens' club in Neuhausen<sup>8</sup>, which organises "housing for help" there. Finding seniors who want to participate is not easy either. But things are getting better and better, the project is becoming better known and more and more people are joining in. Currently there are about 100 such "housing for help"-couples existing in Munich.<sup>9</sup>

*„Klaus Fuckerieder studied biology and chemistry and then became a teacher, he already lived in a flat share and had good experiences. Daniel Caballero is already his second roommate since he registered with "Housing for Help“. During the week, the two of them are a purpose built flat share. Daniel spends the whole day at the TU Munich to do research for his doctoral thesis in biotechnology, which he recently started.*

*On the weekend, however, the two of them do a lot together. For example, they go out for dinner. Klaus prefers to go to the Bavarian inn nearby, but they also keep trying out new restaurants on Daniel's initiative. Or they go on bike tours, listen to lectures together or Daniel cooks for them.“<sup>10</sup>*

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<sup>7</sup> <https://new.biallo.de/soziales/news/senioren-und-studenten-helfen-sich-gegenseitig/>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.seniorentreff-neuhausen.de/wohnen-fuer-hilfe/wohnen-fuer-hilfe-die-alternative-wohnform-fuer-jung-und-alt/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.br.de/fernsehen/ard-alpha/sendungen/campus/wohnen-fuer-hilfe-senioren-studenten-wg-100.html>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.br.de/fernsehen/ard-alpha/sendungen/campus/wohnen-fuer-hilfe-senioren-studenten-wg-100.html>

## 2. Care flatshare (Pflegewohngruppen/ Pflege-WG)

**Idea:** *Three to twelve* persons in need of care live together in one large apartment.<sup>11</sup> A place in a care flatshare is offered by various institutions. It is also possible to set up a nursing home group yourself (see example below). The care insurance fund provides start-up financing of up to EUR 10,000 for this purpose.<sup>12</sup>

**Concept:** One person, a so-called *presence person*, is in charge of organisational, care or community life supporting activities and provides support in housekeeping. The *presence person* is jointly appointed by the residents. Each resident has their own room. Everyday life takes place in the large community room: Here they cook, sing or do crafts together. The principle for care living groups is: as much independence as possible, as much help as necessary. Outpatient care is organised separately.<sup>13</sup>

**Organisation:** The insurance fund subsidises the costs of a presence person for this type of accommodation and covers the costs of outpatient care up to the maximum amount provided for the respective level of care. The rent and meals as well as any optional services are covered by the person in need of care.

Each insured person receives a fixed sum of EUR 214 per month to finance the presence person. If the apartment needs to be redesigned to suit the age of the residents: e.g. the AOK Care Fund will pay up to EUR 4,000 per resident and a maximum of EUR 16,000 per flatshare.<sup>14</sup>

The care provided in the care flatshare is covered by the outpatient services, who are financed by care insurance companies for persons in need of care with a care level of 2 to 5. The benefit amounts of the nursing care insurance funds are therefore based on the "care level".

Level 1	125 €
Level 2	689 €
Level 3	1.298 €
Level 4	1.612 €
Level 5	1.995 €

**Example:** In 2009, Birgitta Neumann was faced with the big question of how she could find a new form of nursing care for her father, who suffers from

<sup>11</sup> <https://wolfsburg-aktiv.de/Wohnen/wie-moechte-ich-wohnen/Pflege-Wohngruppen/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.bielefeld-pflegeberatung.de/Pflegewohngruppen/Allgemeines-0405424950.html>

<sup>13</sup> <https://wolfsburg-aktiv.de/Wohnen/wie-moechte-ich-wohnen/Pflege-Wohngruppen/>

<sup>14</sup> <https://wolfsburg-aktiv.de/Wohnen/wie-moechte-ich-wohnen/Pflege-Wohngruppen/>

dementia. "We wanted to develop something that was different from the usual care and support in a nursing home," is how Birgitta Neumann describes her first experiences. "We wanted to preserve the liveliness and personality of dementia patients in particular, to take things into our own hands and shape them. A guideline of the Alzheimer Gesellschaft Brandenburg e. V. gave her the idea of founding a care-group. At an information event of the Alzheimer Society in Potsdam she met two other nursing relatives. The first three members of the future community of relatives had found each other.

They were all concerned that their relatives should be able to continue their normal lives as far as possible despite the dementia - just like at home. The relatives in need of care should feel every day that they are important, needed and still have many skills. The idea of the care flatshare was convincing because it allows round-the-clock care and at the same time offers an open, free and homelike framework in which the residents are actively involved in all everyday activities.

Which apartment is suitable? Where do other members of the flatshare come from?

When a suitable flat was finally found - a former office floor in Potsdam - the relatives published a press release. Promptly further interested people got in touch. And when it became clear when the move into the shared flat could probably take place, three additional relatives were on board. They were grateful to be able to join such a project. On an area of 300 square metres, ten rooms were now designed in such a way that there was one room each for eight residents to furnish independently. A kitchen-living room was integrated into the 60 square meter living room. The landlord agreed to rebuild the apartment with two bathrooms and three disability-friendly toilets in accordance with his ideas.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> [https://www.bundesgesundheitsministerium.de/fileadmin/Dateien/5\\_Publikationen/Pflege/Praxisseiten/Pflege/BMG\\_Ordner\\_gesamt\\_Screen.pdf](https://www.bundesgesundheitsministerium.de/fileadmin/Dateien/5_Publikationen/Pflege/Praxisseiten/Pflege/BMG_Ordner_gesamt_Screen.pdf)

### 3. Pensioner Flatshare (Senioren-WG) / Dementia Flatshares

**Idea:** Senior citizens' residential communities are available as private or agency-supported alternatives: best agers set up a residential community on the basis of their own initiative, people with increased care needs join special, assisted living communities for senior citizens. Popular and widespread are also the so-called **dementia flatshares**.<sup>16</sup>

**Concept:** In the **classic WG**, several residents share an apartment or a house. As a private retreat, only their own room is available to the residents of a shared apartment; the living room, kitchen and bathrooms are used jointly. Household management is organised jointly. This variant is the closest form of living together. It is a popular solution for people with cognitive disabilities, such as those with dementia.

More privacy is offered by **pensioner house communities**. Each resident lives in his or her own apartment in an apartment building. The overall package of such a senior citizens' residential community usually includes common rooms, activities and a common service network.

**Outpatient assisted living communities** are usually set up by welfare associations or care services. They are aimed at people in need of care who would prefer to live in a shared apartment rather than in a nursing home. The use of space is the same as in a classic flat-sharing community, the persons in need of care are involved in everyday tasks as far as possible. Supervised senior citizens' flatshares are accompanied by nursing staff who coordinate household, care and group activities.<sup>17</sup>

**Organisation:** Clarify legal form: In general, the formation of an association is a good start when setting up a flatshare. If you or your relative would like to live in a rented flat, you will conclude a cooperation agreement with the other residents. This defines in concrete terms how the cooperation within the group should be structured. Further points are rights of co-determination, the use of the common areas and decision-making powers in the event of a change of residents.

If property is to be acquired or built, you can act as a partnership under civil law (GbR) during the planning and construction phase and found a condominium owners' association (WEG) after completion of the work.

However, if one or more residents are in need of care, help must be organised. This too is easier and cheaper to do in a residential home for pensioners. The advantages at a glance:

Lower rental costs mean that more money can be spent on nursing care services.

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<sup>16</sup> <https://www.pflege.de/altenpflege/senioren-wg/>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.pflege.de/altenpflege/senioren-wg/>

- An outpatient nursing service can be jointly commissioned, which reduces costs, e.g. through lower travel expenses.
- If several residents are entitled to care allowance, the funds can be pooled.
- In principle, a normal senior citizens' shared flat can be converted into an outpatient assisted living community if necessary and then the corresponding funding can be obtained.

Residents of outpatient residential groups can receive additional subsidies from the nursing care insurance. For example, senior citizens who live in a nursing home and receive nursing allowance, outpatient care benefits in kind or care and relief services are entitled to the so-called residential group supplement. Those are EUR 214 per month, provided that at least two other flatmates have a proven need for care.#

Those who are entitled to the housing group bonus can apply for start-up financing for the age-appropriate or barrier-free remodelling of the apartment (so-called living space adaptation) when founding a new nursing WG. The nursing care insurance fund grants up to EUR 2,500 per person and is limited to EUR 10,000 per residential group. Residents of a nursing care flatshare can claim nursing care services together with other residents. This "pooling" of services makes it possible to make better use of economic resources, thus saving time and money.

**Online Services:** <https://www.wohnen-im-alter.de>

**Example:** **Dementia flatshare** – In outpatient assisted living communities for people with dementia, 6 to 12 people usually live together in one large apartment. They are looked after by an outpatient nursing service. The patients (represented by their relatives or legal guardians) are tenants. They pay rent for their personal living space and proportionally for jointly used rooms (living room, kitchen, bathrooms). They have the right of the house or the power of the keys, can come and go and receive visitors as they wish.<sup>18</sup>

Matthias Stangl had the idea of turning his home into a dementia flatshare after his children had left home. He simply had too much space: empty children's rooms, large living rooms for a family of four, plus the dental laboratory downstairs. "At the time, I first called Marianne Tschammer from the St. Elisabeth welfare centre," he explains. After all, the nursing service is the most important thing in such a project. Without it, nothing works, says Stangl. [...]

The expenses of Stangl are offset by the income from the shared rooms. For the self-employed dental technician Stangl, the conversion of the house also represents a form of retirement security. [...] "If I were young, I would open one flatshare after the other. Because the people whose family members suffer from dementia will at some point despair at home," says Stangl. He feels encouraged by the interest in the WG in Marktheidenfeld. "The prevention care room is always fully booked," he says. It is a kind of

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<sup>18</sup> <https://www.deutsche-alzheimer.de/unser-service/archiv-alzheimer-info/wohngemeinschaften-fuer-menschen-mit-demenz-was-ist-das-eigentlich.html>



guest room in which potential new flatmates can be accommodated for a few weeks while their relatives are unable to care for them. The shared flats offer a win-win situation for all sides. Not only the residents and their relatives are more satisfied, but also the nursing staff.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> <https://www.mainpost.de/regional/main-spessart/Demenz-WG-Gruender-Stangl-Ich-war-oft-davor-hinzuschmeissen;art776,10415939>

## 4. Multi-Generational-Living

**Idea:** Intergenerational project in which young and old live together in a building complex. The projects include units for people in need of care.

**Concept:** The focus is on the **coexistence of different generations** in one building complex and builds up upon the conscious coexistence of different generations, mutual assistance and care. Elderly people in need of help can stay longer in their flats with the support of their housemates. Younger people (for example single parents with children) experience relief through elderly people who are still mentally and physically vital. In addition, the communal living of predominantly older people who are willing to support each other is also being promoted (old help old).<sup>20</sup>

The essential elements of multi-generational living are:<sup>21</sup>

- A centrally located site connected to good infrastructure for a building complex of about *ten to twenty residential units*.
- The construction of barrier-free, age-appropriate apartments (including elevators) of varying sizes for mixed-age occupancy (possibly supplemented by a flatshare apartment).
- The creation of common rooms and (optional) jointly usable outdoor areas. The common rooms are to be planned in such a way that later conversion into a normal apartment is possible without considerable expense
- An association of residents, which organizes the occupancy of the apartments and living together (discusses the accommodation of new residents and their conditions e.g. dementia, which poses a range of special needs)
- occupancy of the flats according to age groups (*e.g. two thirds young people under sixty and one third old people over sixty*), predominant occupation by elderly is also a possibility.

**Organisation:** The residents organise themselves in a registered residents' association, which they join as members. The residents' association concludes a cooperation agreement with the building owner or investor, in which the responsibilities of the association are regulated. This concerns in particular the right to propose new residents of the flats to ensure that they fit into the age mix and also become members of the association. This ensures that the model can be maintained even if there is a change of tenants. The cooperation agreement must also regulate the administration and management of the common areas and other organisational issues. The residents themselves have individual rental agreements with the building owner or investor. This also applies to the residents of the group flat. Living in an outpatient residential community means that each resident concludes a separate rental agreement and that assistance and care services are purchased additionally according to individual needs.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> <https://www.stadt-koeln.de/mediaasset/content/pdf56/konzept-mehrgenerationenwohnen.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.stadt-koeln.de/mediaasset/content/pdf56/konzept-mehrgenerationenwohnen.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.stadt-koeln.de/mediaasset/content/pdf56/konzept-mehrgenerationenwohnen.pdf>

Since multi-generational living can ultimately also relieve the state financially, various funding options are available. For example, the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth has launched a new federal programme to promote multi-generational houses (as day meeting point) in Germany on 1 January 2017.

Above all, the new programme will give these homes more leeway in their work, so that the services they offer can be better geared to the initial situation and local needs. In addition, the communities are to be strengthened.

**Example:**

With currently six multi-generation projects, GAG (a cooperative) is the largest provider of this type of housing in Cologne. Living and living with children" was launched in Cologne-Ossendorf as early as 1993, followed by the "Ledo multi-generational residential building" in Niehl, the "Villa Stellwerk" in Nippes, the "Villa anders" in Ehrenfeld and the "Auf dem Sandberg" and "Nürnberger Straße" projects in Poll and Höhenberg respectively. Further multi-generation projects are currently being developed in the Waldbadviertel in Ostheim and on Robertstrasse in Kalk. Residents' associations have a right of proposal for the occupancy of these apartments. If you are interested, please contact the respective residents' association directly. The basic rule in most houses is: two thirds of the residents should be under 60 years of age and one third over 60.

Common to all multi-generational projects is a residents' association, which the people who live in the houses have founded. The association is the prerequisite for the common rooms, the heart of the facilities, to be financed by the City of Cologne. The city pays the basic rent for this space for 20 years.<sup>23</sup>

**Villa anders** (Cologne): Villa anders is open to lesbians, gays and transgender people who are interested in self-determined, discrimination-free living. Singles, couples and rainbow families are welcome, as well as those who earn well or less well, younger and older people. Some spend their studies here, many their years of work, others their retirement. (<https://www.villa-anders-koeln.de>)

**Leuchtturm e.G.** (Berlin): In October 2009, 27 adults and 15 children moved into the residential building Pappelallee 43. The construction and energy concept are based on modern sustainable and ecological principles. The house community is made up of different living groups, consisting of singles, families, pensioners and various flat share constellations. The client and owner is Leuchtturm eG, a non-ownership/profit-oriented housing cooperative. Members of the cooperative receive the right to live but not the right to buy, they pay rent. (<http://www.leuchtturm-wohnprojekt.de>)

**RuT-Rad und Tat Berlin gGmbH** plans an inclusive, cross-generational housing project for women-loving women and queer people that offers

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<sup>23</sup> <https://www.gag-koeln.de/die-gag/wohnen-mit-der-gag/fur-jeden-eine-heimat/sonderwohnformen/mehrgenerationenwohnprojekte/>

affordable, non-discriminatory and barrier-free living space and enables its residents to lead a self-determined, dignified life until old age. The current state of planning envisages an approximately eight-storey new building in the form of a disk, which is to be built on Berolinastraße in Berlin's Mitte district. The property developer is the state-owned Wohnungsbaugesellschaft Berlin-Mitte mbH (WBM). Will provide approx. 70 barrier-free rental apartments, 4 of which are wheelchair accessible, plus 8 places in a shared care apartment.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> <http://wohnprogramm.fgw-ev.de/die-modellprojekte/rut-frauen-kultur-wohnen-in-berlin-mitte/>

## B) ALTERNATIVE TREATMENTS/ OFFERS IN ELDERLY CARE

### 1. (CHAIR) YOGA

Outline: In Germany Yoga practices found their way into traditional care, residential homes, nursing homes, senior centres as early as 2000. It is also called *Chair Yoga* ("Stuhlyoga") or Soft Yoga and Yoga institutions adapted to the societal development by offering supplemental courses for Yoga teachers, who want to offer services to residential homes/ pensioner flatshares etc.

Courses for teachers: <https://www.seniorenyoga.de>  
<https://wis.ihk.de/seminar-kurs/yoga-fuer-senioren-uebungsleiter.html>

Example 1: Regina Immig moved into a senior citizens' apartment in the Hospital zum Heiligen Geist (Hamburg-Poppenbüttel) almost three years ago, after her husband died in 2014. Today the 85-year-old is happy that she has moved from Heimfeld to the immediate vicinity of her three sons who live in the north and east of Hamburg. "Regular exercise is very important to me," emphasizes Mrs. Immig. "After an hour of yoga, I feel rested and free of tension, and the exercises also promote my inner peace," she says.

Kerstin Steinhardt runs several yoga groups in various nursing homes. The 54-year-old has specialized in yoga for the elderly. Most of the exercises take place in a sitting position so that none of the participants falls down. Only at the end of the class there is a simple exercise in standing position to get the circulation going. "Mobility and strength should be maintained, this is the best prevention against stiffening of the musculoskeletal system. Concentration and coordination are practiced, and then the relaxation effect automatically sets in," says Kerstin Steinhardt. Yoga can contribute to a better sleep and lead to pain relief in case of shoulder, neck or back problems. "Mobility can also improve at an advanced age," the yoga trainer encourages. Regina Immig can only confirm this argument. She says: "Without chair yoga I would be missing something and I would be really sad! Besides the sportive aspect, sociability is also very important for me. In my group I feel really good, I experience so much joy there!"<sup>25</sup>

Example 2: A project in Haus Abendfrieden has shown that residents in need of care are more balanced, cheerful and calm and suffer less pain thanks to yoga. On the day of the yoga practice, fewer essential medicines had to be given. The prerequisite is an appropriately adapted yoga, which is also suitable for participants with pronounced physical and cognitive disorders. Compared to a classical yoga class, the adaptations consist especially in shorter class units, smaller group sizes, exercises practiced on a chair/

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<sup>25</sup> <https://www.umsorgt-wohnen.de/Gesundheit/Yoga-im-Altenheim>

wheelchair, open eyes and shorter design of the individual exercise elements.<sup>26</sup>

## 2. QIGONG/TAI CHI

*The method does not seem to be very widespread and has not been applied nationwide. It remains a niche therapy for now.*

**Outline:** Qigong is part of Chinese medicine and is taught to bring body and mind into harmony. It is not only used to treat a disease, as it is common in conventional medicine - but the person as a whole. The Qi, i.e. the energy flow in the body, is to be regulated.

A Qigong exercise consists of three elements: movement, breathing and concentration on oneself. The exercises have a proven relaxing effect. The muscles are trained, the nervous system is strengthened, you stay flexible. Especially for seniors, the exercises are also said to relieve high blood pressure and heart disease. However, this has not yet been scientifically proven.

**Example:** The former geriatric caregiver Divyam de Martin-Sommerfeldt (55) from Hamburg developed a method that should make Qigong possible for seniors. He called it "Chinese fit in old age", CFA for short. The exercises in CFA are *adapted to the participants, who often can hardly stand any more* - the exercises are therefore taught in a modified sitting position.<sup>27</sup>

**Divyam de Martin-Sommerfeldt, Qigong teacher in Hamburg:** "Since I was an outpatient caregiver in the 80/90's, I was often asked by seniors to do exercises with them, which I told them about. Clients are usually very interested to know what I do outside my work as a caregiver. [...] In my 'Practice for Bodywork', 'Senior Qigong' has become an important part of my work. [...]"

In 2004 I entered into a cooperation with Jan Leminsky, operator of the 'Wu Wei School Tai Chi and Qi Gong'. His proposal was to offer bodywork for seniors in residences and homes. Mr. Leminsky is responsible for finances, my tasks are related to Qigong contents and everything that is connected with it, e.g. team training and support. [...]"

Because of the different condition of the participants or their restrictions, the teacher has to be especially attentive. It is important to make sure that all participants are well during the activities and that they participate in the course according to their possibilities. Some only watch, others follow the exercises with a smile or even laugh. There are also residents who sit quietly in their seats and watch the activities with a satisfied look. It happens that participants leave and re-enter the exercise room several

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<sup>26</sup> <http://www.altenpflege-online.net/Infopool/Nachrichten/Betreuung/Heimbewohner-mit-Yoga-aktivieren>

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.lebenlang.de/magazin/2019-17/qigong-besser-spaet-als-qi-uebungen-fuer-senioren/>

times. In these situations the Qigong teacher has to be patient and make sure that the group lessons are not affected. Demented participants sometimes ask 3 or 5 times about the sense and purpose of the exercises. After a short answer the group work is continued. Usually the questioner is satisfied with the answer and most of the time the other students react tolerantly to such situations.”<sup>28</sup>

### 3. AYURVEDA

*The method does not seem to be very widespread and has not been applied nationwide. It remains a niche therapy for now.*

Outline: As the science of long life, Ayurveda offers methods of geriatric care and describes in detail the pattern of sequential loss of biological strength with age. By combining an uplifting Rasayana therapy with gentle cleansing methods (pancha-karma), healthy dietetics, special geriatric recommendations for life management (svasthavrta, sadvrta, yoga) and the use of spiritual therapy methods (sattvavajaya), it is possible to offer holistic geriatric care.

The local health authorities are surprisingly open-minded for new, holistic ways in the old person care: In Austria an Ayurveda training regulation for old person caretakers and care assistants was adopted by the Ministry of Health (in 2009). And in Germany there are concrete projects on a regional level (e.g. in the Main-Kinzig-Kreis, Hesse) to integrate Ayurvedic health care and therapeutic approaches into out-patient and in-patient geriatric care. "If Ayurveda has a chance of getting into the statutory health insurance funds, it will be through geriatrics and nursing care", predicts Dr. R. Schlesinger, Director of the Vienna Office of the European Society for Quality Management and Patient Safety (ESQH) at a panel discussion on the topic of the 10th National Ayurveda Symposium in Birstein.<sup>29</sup>

Example: The kitchen in the house also does justice to the multicultural therapy offer of the KWA Clinic Stift Rottal. Thus the Bavarian menu line is supplemented by the range of dishes recommended by Indian Ayurveda.<sup>30</sup>

### 4. DIGITAL ANGELS<sup>31</sup>

The "Digital Angels" are a mobile team of advisors. It consists of several experts in the field of digitalisation and internet security. In workshops and lectures or at information stands, the experts show, for example, how to order food online, use messenger services and online banking apps, convert your home into a smart home or make an appointment at an office online. Not only how to find your way around a computer is part of the workshops, but also how to use tablets and smartphones is explained to the participants with the help of practical examples.

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<sup>28</sup> <https://taiji-forum.de/qigong/senioren-qigong/>

<sup>29</sup> [https://www.ayurveda-akademie.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/PDFs/Artikel/ayurveda-alte-menschen-rosenberg.pdf](https://www.ayurveda-akademie.org/fileadmin/user_upload/PDFs/Artikel/ayurveda-alte-menschen-rosenberg.pdf)

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.kwa.de/de/standorte/bayern/bad-griesbach/kwa-stift-rottal/pflege/therapieangebote/>

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.mehrgenerationenhaeuser.de/meldungen/topnews/news/digitale-engel-fuer-aeltere-menschen/>

Between 2019 and 2022, the "Digital Angels" will use their bus to travel to over 400 stations throughout Germany. The project is financed by the Federal Ministry of Family Affairs.<sup>32</sup>

## 5. ROBOTS

Robot "Pepper" could soon be used in German nursing homes to entertain residents with music and pantomime or to instruct them in movement exercises such as Tai Chi. The device, programmed by computer scientists from the University of Siegen, is also intended to stimulate a social discussion about the use of robots in nursing care. [...] In Japan, the human-like robot is already on the market and entertains senior citizens, for example, with Tai Chi or guessing games. The changes there have already progressed much further, says Rainer Wieching, who coordinates the joint project of the University of Siegen, the computer company C&S and the Kiel University of Applied Sciences.

Also because the population in Japan is extremely over-aged, more machines are to take over support tasks there. For example, a robot seal with cuddly fur, a kind of pet substitute for old people's homes, has been in use for some time.

According to the latest statistics for 2015, almost 2.9 million people in Germany will be dependent on outpatient and inpatient care, and this number could rise to around 3.6 million by 2030. There is already a shortage of skilled workers, with vacancies for certified geriatric nurses remaining unfilled for an average of 171 days. "Robots cannot replace humans", emphasises Lukas Sander, care expert at the trade fair organiser Vincentz Network.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> <https://www.mdr.de/sachsen/chemnitz/zschopau/digitale-engel-zschopau-106.html>

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.rundschau-online.de/news/aus-aller-welt/moderne-altenpflege-roboter-als-entertainer-und-pfleger-im-altenheim-29825340>