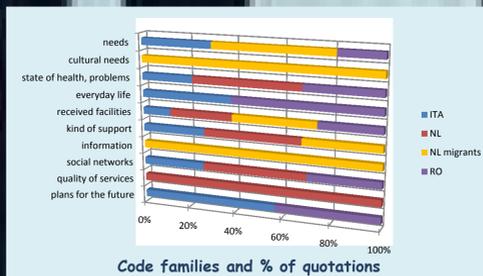# Differences and similarities in cultural perception of elderly needs.

Laura Remaschi*
Patrizia Meringolo*
Ovidiu Gavrilovici**
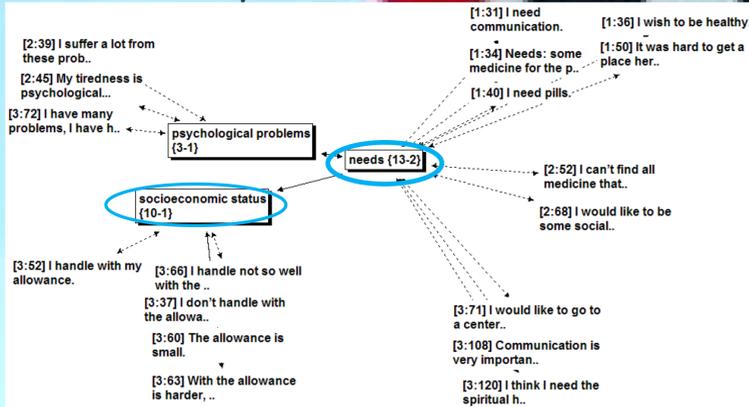Christophe Loubat***
Dept. of Psychology University of Florence, Italy*
University A.I. Cuza Iasi, Romania**
Fondazione Istituto A. Devoto, Florence, Italy***

This study was part of a wider project http://www.vgs-video.it/GRAMPS_EU/it/homepage focused on testing a model for social support addressed to elderly people in three European countries (NETHERLANDS, ROMANIA, ITALY).
The project was aimed to improve social policies, cooperation between social and health services and care givers, collaboration between formal and informal care givers.
Theoretical background came from community based researches about elderly people in weak situation (Greenglass, Fiksenbaum, & Eaton, 2006; Kempen et al., 1999), social support (Carstensen, 1992; Grano & Lucidi, 2005; Sarason, Levine, Basham, & Sarason, 1983), different housing or different care (David, Moos, & Kahn, 1981; Moos & Lenke, 1984; Timko & Moos, 1990, 1991; Zaff & Devlin, 1998), neighbors' networks (Unger & Wandersman, 1985).

Participants have been involved in three focus groups (1 for elderly people, 1 for families, 1 for social workers) in each country, carried out in different areas (towns and rural areas). Method was qualitative analysis founded on Grounded theory. In this contribution we will show findings about differences and similarities in elderly needs expressed by people coming from different countries and from migrants.
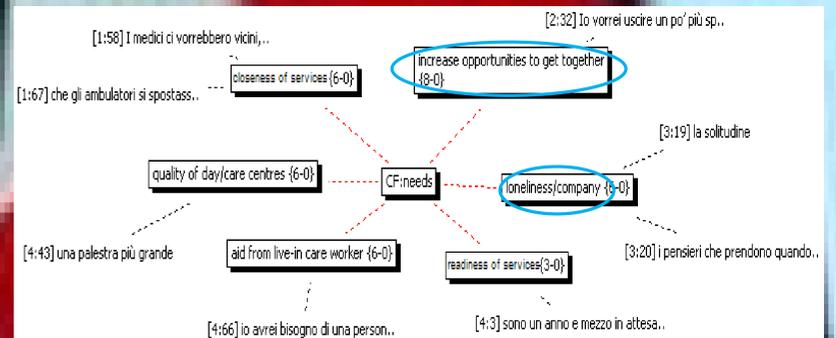

Code families and % of quotations
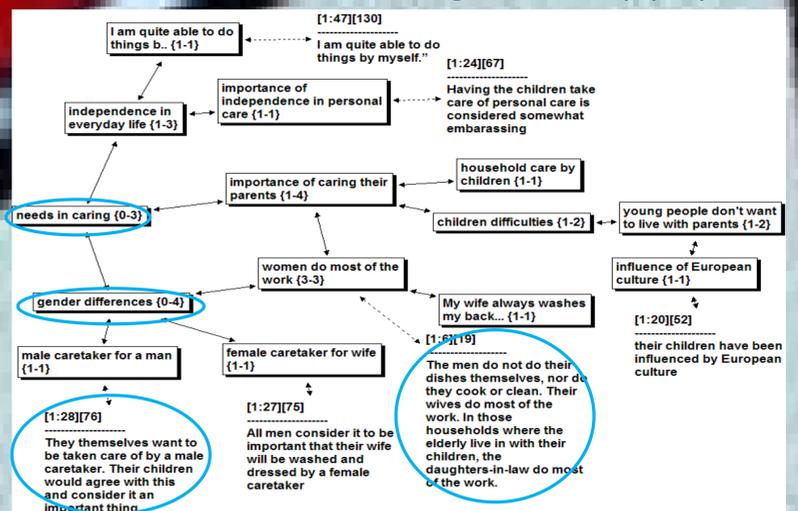
Perceived elderly needs: Romania

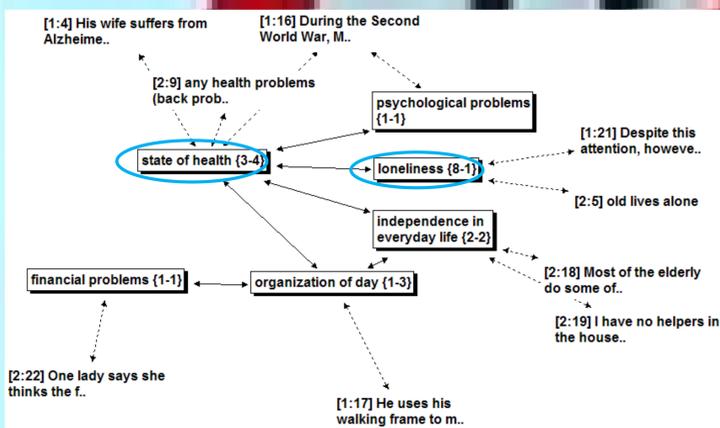1 = Campolung (rural area); 2 = Iasi (urban area); 3 = Timisoara (urban area).

Italia

NL migrant elderly people

Nederlands

Results showed that Netherlands services seem more efficient, in Romania there are less possibilities of social benefits but higher family and neighborhoods support, in Italy there are more NGO and Voluntary organizations in managing services.
Elderly people equally pointed out the importance of interpersonal relationships, particularly as regard being listened by relatives and care workers and having possibilities of socialization. Other important issue was independence in every day life, that seems a protective factor against risk of disempowerment and depression.
Migrants underlined a specific need of an intercultural approach, that may allow to partially overcome the mistrust and the difficulties in social inclusion. In health care it is important for them to pay attention to activities as preparing and taking meals, receiving bodily care, and to gender or cultural lifestyle differences.
Lack of carefulness may become an important weakness in services' effectiveness.

References
Carstensen, L. L. (1992). Motivation for social contact across the life span: A theory of socioemotional selectivity. In R. Dienstbier, & J. E. Jacobs (Eds.), Developmental perspectives on motivation: Nebraska symposium on motivation (209-254). Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska.
David, T. G., Moos, R. H., & Kahn, J. R. (1981). Community integration among elderly residents of sheltered care settings. American Journal of Community Psychology, 9, 513–526.
Grano, C. & Lucidi F. (2005). Psicologia dell'invecchiamento e promozione della salute. Roma: Carocci.
Greenglass, E., Fiksenbaum, L. & Eaton, J. (2006). The relationship between coping, social support, functional disability and depression in the elderly. Anxiety, Stress, and Coping, 19(1), 15-31.
Kempen, G. I. J. M., van Heuvelen, M. J. G., van Sonderen, E., van den Brink, R. H. S., Kooijman, A. C., & Ormel, J. (1999). The relationship of functional limitations to disability and the moderating effects of psychosocial attributes in community-dwelling older persons. Social Science & Medicine , 48, 1161-1172.
Moos, R. H., & Lemke, S. L. (1984). Supportive residential settings for older people. In I. Altman, M. P. Lawton, & J. F. Wohlwill (Eds.), Elderly people and the environment (pp. 159–190). New York: Plenum.
Sarason, I. G., Levine, H. M., Basham, R. B., & Sarason, B. R. (1983). Assessing social support: The social support questionnaire. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 44, 127-139.
Timko, C., & Moos, R. H. (1990). Determinants of interpersonal support and self-direction in group residential facilities. Journal of Gerontology, 45, 184–192.
Timko, C., & Moos, R. H. (1991). A typology of social climates in group residential facilities for older people. Journal of Gerontology, 46, 160–169.
Unger, D. G., & Wandersman, A. (1985). The importance of neighbors: The social, cognitive, and affective components of neighboring. American Journal of Community Psychology, 13, 139–169.
Zaff, J. & Devlin, A. S. (1998). Sense of Community in Housing for the Elderly. Journal of Community Psychology, Vol. 26, No. 4, 381-398.