

# Palliative Care for Persons with Dementia – Two Case Studies in Nursing Homes

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## 1 BACKGROUND

We live in an ageing society. This can be realized very well in nursing homes: residents are increasingly old and old-old persons. Their stay in the nursing home gets shorter, which means that they are closer to death upon admission – therefore we consider Palliative Care to be an important approach for the very old. Furthermore an increasing percentage of persons living in a nursing home suffers from dementia. Our research relies on a critical attitude concerning nursing-approaches which are merely oriented on functional processes and which concentrate purely on deficits such as biological degradation of the brain. On the contrary: We see challenging behavior of old persons and persons with dementia as a result of and a reaction to the (institutional) environment.

## 2 AIMS

The research aims at generating systematic knowledge about two methods of communication with people with dementia – Validation and Basale Stimulation and embedding the two methods into scientific research. We want to support nursing staff and management to respect the subjective point of view of old persons and to make a competent choice of communication methods. The research team is committed to contributing to the well-being of chronically ill, cognitively challenged old persons.

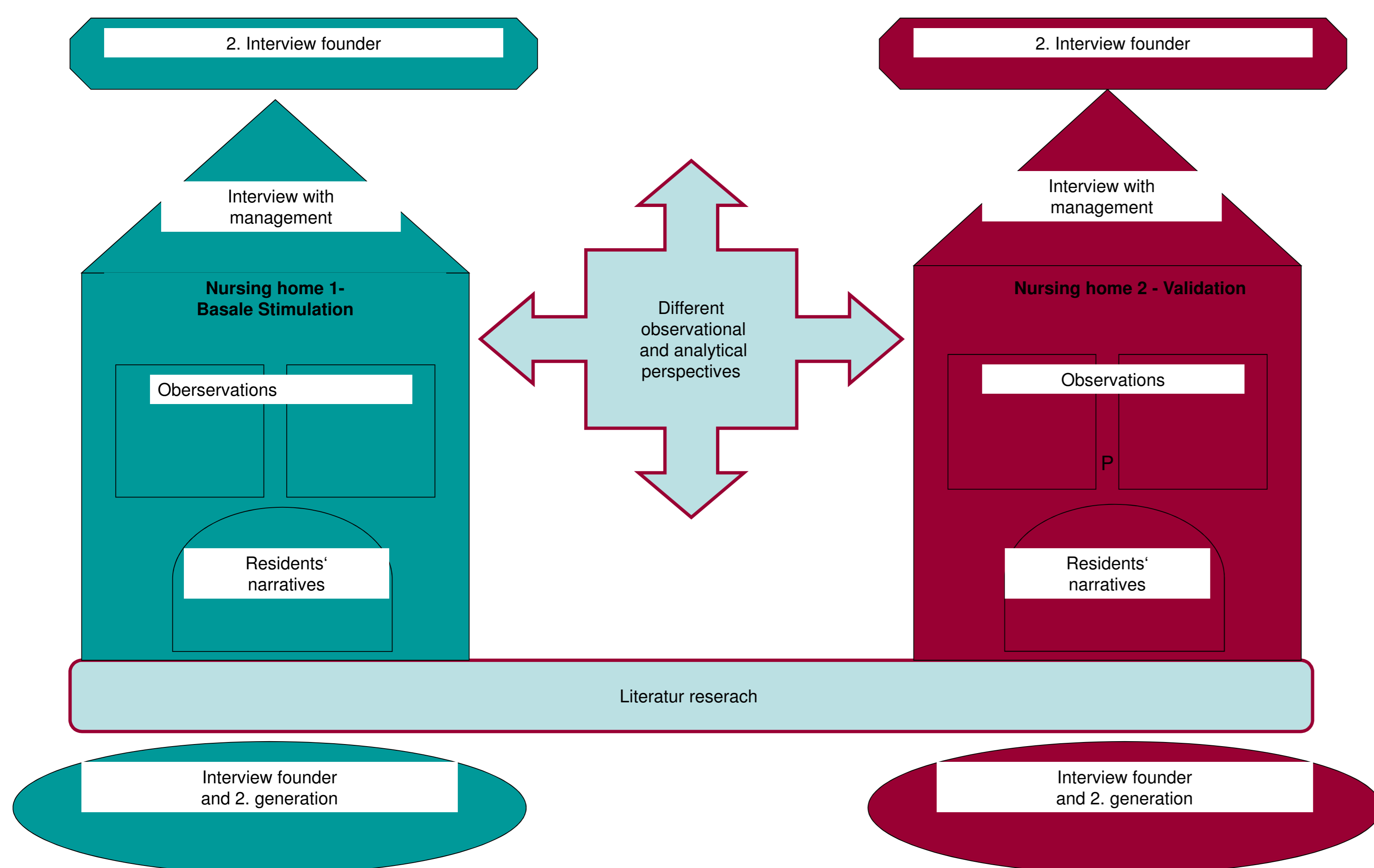


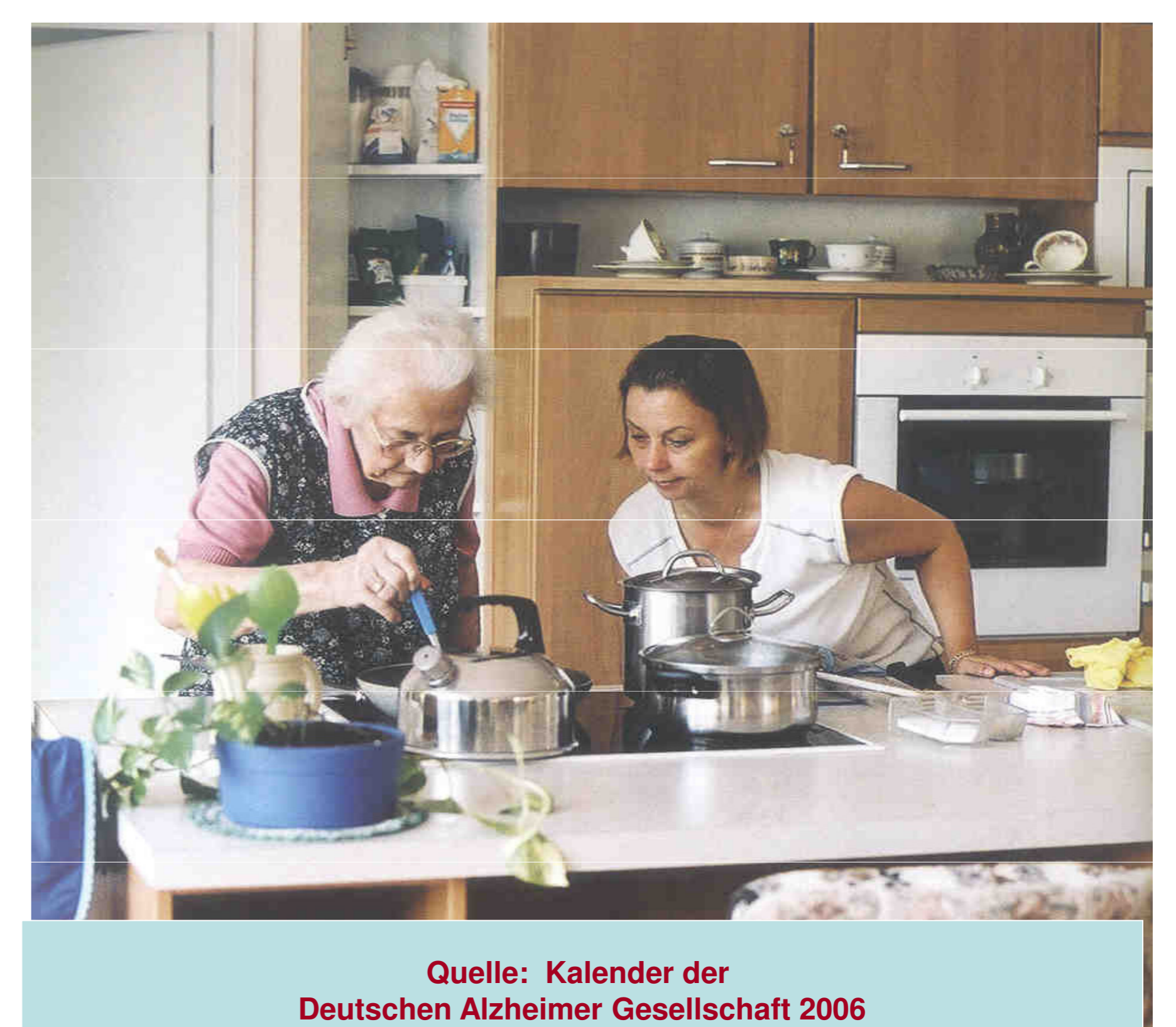
Figure 1: Study design

## 3 STUDY DESIGN AND METHODS

After the literature research we performed interviews with the founder and an expert for each of the two methods. Participant observation and analysis of the nursing documentation in two nursing homes was performed for Validation and Basale Stimulation. Narratives of residents have been generated for Validation and for Basale Stimulation the two nursing teams. The findings were analyzed first by the founders of the methods and consequently by the researcher team. The research project establishes a cooperation between nursing homes, research institutions and teaching institutions for the two methods of communication. This relationship between research and practice constitutes a “transdisciplinary triangle”. The major qualities of transdisciplinary research are seen as: social and practically grounded problems as starting point for research; research is oriented along the needs of those concerned; collaboration cuts across boundaries between professions and disciplines; participatory design of research projects.

## 4 RESULTS

- The two communication methods share common values and attitudes that can be described as „person centered approach“. They also share criteria of successful implementation.
- Both methods focus on the PERSON: This can be considered both as strength and as weakness:
  - The PERSON-centered attitude of staff is a strength
  - The lack of attention for the ORGANIZATION (is considered as the opposite of PERSON) is a weakness – organizational criteria for implementation are neglected
- The Case studies show: In order to implement the two methods of person-centered communication in nursing homes, one needs to pay attention to structure and culture in the organizations.
- The framework condition in the nursing homes are acting as driving and forces and barriers for successful
- Management and management decisions play a key role for successful implementation of person centered approaches in nursing homes



Quelle: Kalender der Deutschen Alzheimer Gesellschaft 2006

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