



NPM Visits to
Retirement
and Nursing
Homes

NPM Visits to Nursing- and Retirement Homes

- In Austria, there are around 850 larger retirement and nursing homes with more than 75,000 beds. More than 400 of these are public institutions and facilities. Slightly more than 450 retirement and nursing homes are owned or run by private entities, of which 79 are owned or run by religious organisations.
- The commissions of the Austrian Ombudsman Board visited 105 retirement and nursing homes in 2015.

Focal points of our visits

- Protection of personal liberty, autonomy, self-determination, privacy
- Restriction of personal freedom
- Prevention of violence
- Quality of care, personnel

Self-Determination & Autonomy: Frequent Problems

- Fixed times for eating and sleeping; fixed days for taking a shower, e.g. – individual likings and needs are not taken into consideration
 - Elderly people are often afraid to complain because they fear to be treated worse
- “Assembly line”-routines often have to do with insufficient staffing

Privacy/Dignity: Problems

- Doors left open during care giving
- Shared rooms: No screens used to protect privacy
- Talking about residents as if they were not there

Restriction of Personal Freedom

- Restriction measures are used without seeking for a more lenient alternative (e.g. sensor beams, floor care, splitted bed side panels, calming talks, evening activities...)
- No alternatives available
- Measures are not correctly documented
- Measures are applied without reporting them correctly

Medication-based Restrictions of Freedom

- Medication is given to sedate or tranquilize a person without therapeutic indication
- Hard to detect: no clear cut-off in dosage, patients react very differently to the same medication, doctors can give wrong indications, etc.
- Signs/hints: e.g. drugs are prescribed in the case of “restlessness” without a traceable diagnosis, staff is not sensitized to the topic...