

## ABSTRACT

This project is an explorative qualitative study with the following problem formulation: How can we from a social constructionist perspective understand what relationships predominate in communities of practice where nurses give residents in nursing homes sleeping medicine in long periods despite the fact that they know that sleeping medicine only has an effect in a short term.

Our purpose is first and foremost to obtain an understanding of the above mentioned problem. Furthermore, we wish to bring this problem into focus, as well as nurses' tasks in relation to the administration of sleeping medicine. In addition, we wish to commence a discussion among nurses.

In order to answer the above mentioned question, we have conducted a focus group interview with nurses employed at a nursing home. The questions used in the interview are derived from Etienne Wenger's theory on Communities of Practice.

Our study shows that despite the fact that nurses know that the medicine only has an effect in a short period they have nevertheless "negotiated" a common agreement that "allows" them to give sleeping medicine in longer periods. To some extent, the ruling negative attitude in society with regard to the elderly is reflected in nurses' priorities in connection with the old resident's sleeping problems.

**Keywords:** sleeping pills and elderly, hypnotics and old age, hypnotics and sideeffects, non-pharmacologic treatments of sleep disorders and assessment.