How do preventive home visits affect older peoples’ health and possibility for a good life in their own home?

Older peoples experiences with preventive home visits in a Norwegian municipality.

Background
The main aim of preventive home visits (PHV) is to support and uphold home dwelling older people’s health and well-being, and thus to prevent or postpone functional decline and need for comprehensive health care. The interest in PHV is increasing due to expected demographic changes. The potential of PHV to improve some aspects of older peoples’ health is well documented but the knowledge base to guide the interventions is limited. Studies that shed light on experiences of the recipients of PHV are called for.

PHV in the current municipality
- Offered to all home dwelling elderly from 75 years of age (75-80% accept).
- Performed by ten experienced, specially trained nurses.
- First visit establish contact, conversation on and broad mapping of health resources and health problems.
- Minimum yearly follow up.

Results
The home visitors provided help and support within these main categories:
- Feeling safe and secure
- to cope
- to live well
- to be somebody
Perceived need and benefit varied, and some of the younger seniors did not identify with the topics introduced during the visit.

Conclusion
- Preventive home visits represent a stable and safe support for the aging citizens on their journey from who they once were and who they strive to sustain, and towards an unknown future situation.
- The health visitors help the older citizens to preserve independence, a good life and a preferred self, through individually tailored support and follow up.
- Health promotive aspects of the service are visible and highly valued by most of the informants.