

Presentation

The Importance of Health Care for Rural Settlement Decisions and the Potential Role of eHealth

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Rural eHealth Report

Main research question:

Can the introduction of eHealth services in rural areas counteract migration out of rural areas?

Background

- Declining population in rural areas
- Net out-migration from rural areas
- Public expense pressure due to ageing population
- Declining access to medical care in rural areas

Two study questions

- Does access to health care play a role for people when they decide where to live?

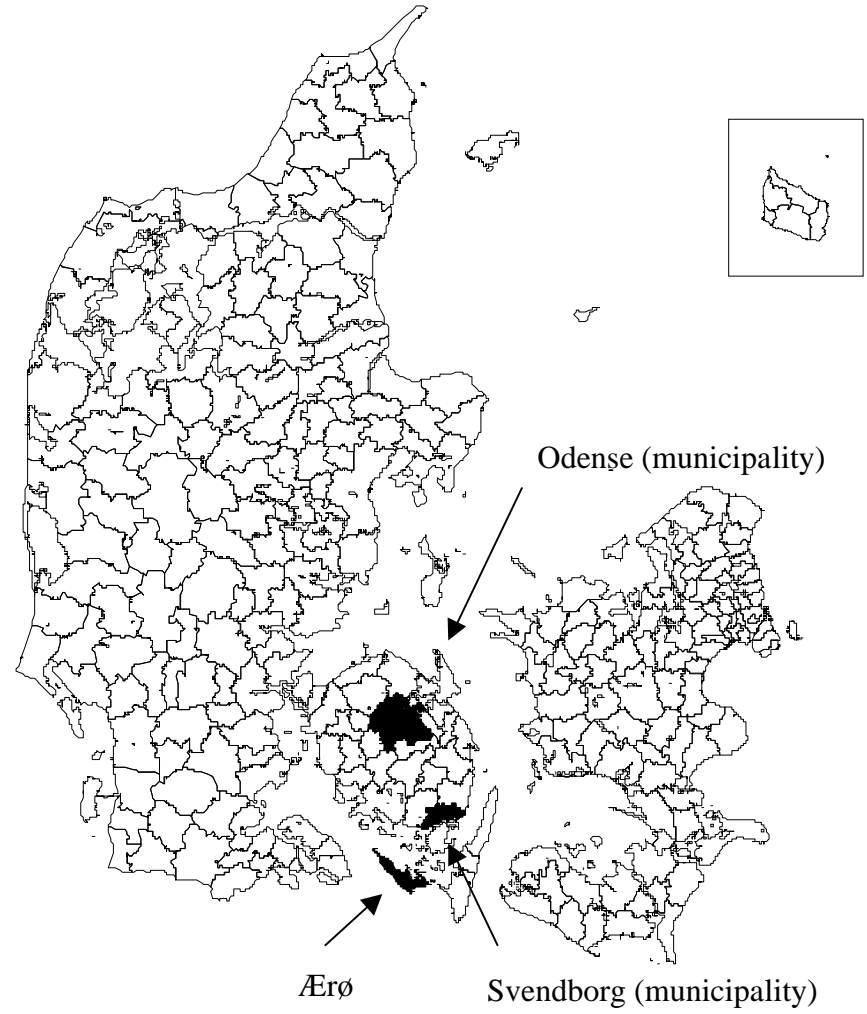
And if so,

- Are people willing to receive health care via eHealth applications?

Data collection by DIRRD

- Questionnaire collection among current population on Ærø (n=1000) and Odense (n=1015)
- Interviews with migrants from Ærø to Odense and Svendborg (n=18) and from Odense and Svendborg to Ærø (n=25).

Study areas



Questionnaire Study

Respondents

- Long-time residents (min. 3 years) in Ærø or Odense City
- Age: 18-80
- Head of household
- One person per household

Questionnaire Results

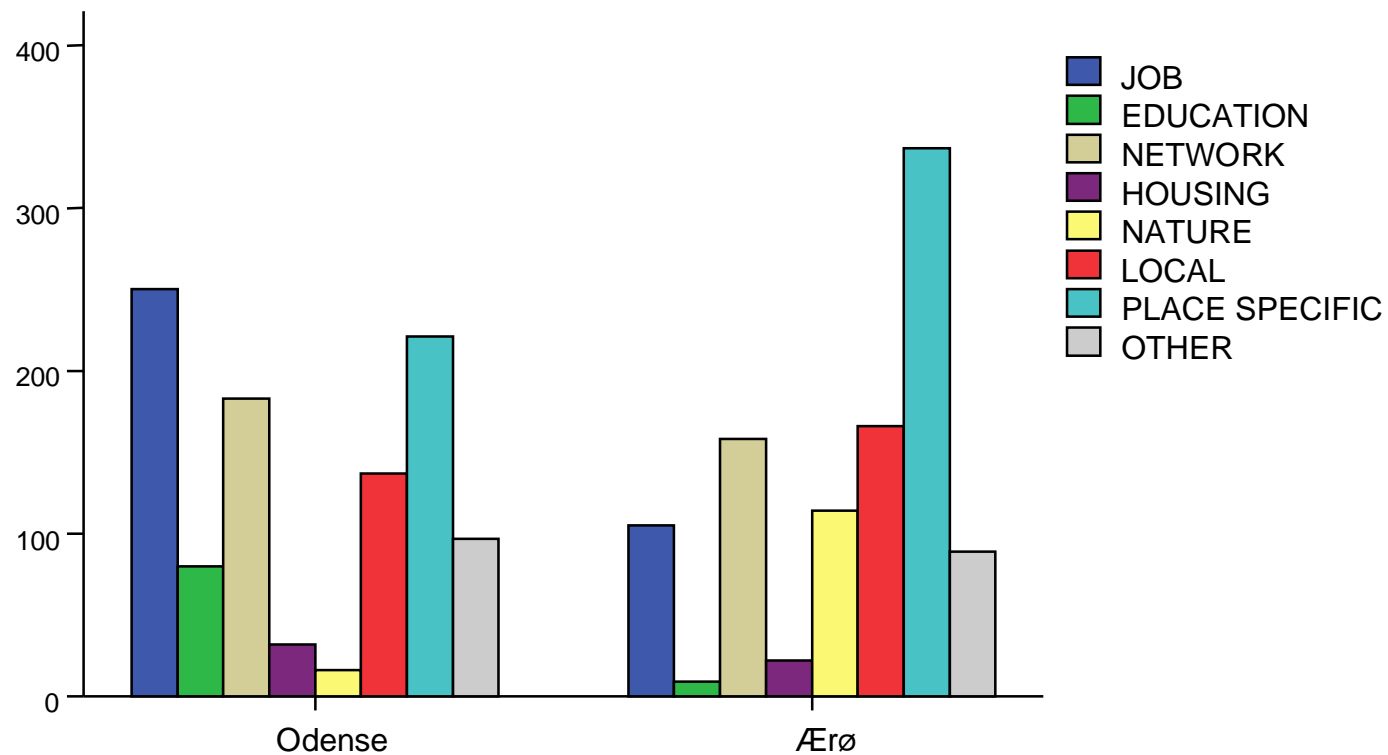
Reasons for current settlement location

An open question:

“Please, mention in 1 or 2 key words the most important reasons, why you live in Ærø/Odense”

Questionnaire Results

**Why do people live where they live?
Odense and Ærø (n=2016)**



Questionnaire Results

“Access to health care?”

Very important, important, not so important, or not important at all?

Very important: 61%

Significantly higher

- Women
- With age
- Ærø (73%) as opposed to Odense

Questionnaire Results

“Would you consider moving if distance to GP increases significantly?”

Yes: 11%

Significantly lower

- 70-80 aged (8%)
- Ærø (9%)

Questionnaire Results

“Would you consider moving if the nearest hospital closes?”

Yes: 19%

Significantly higher

- Living with partner
- Those with children
- Permanent illness
- Ærø (29%)

Significantly lower

- 70-80 aged

Questionnaire Results

Use of video telephone (eHealth question 1)

Which do you agree with most?

Statement 1

“If I could get a faster treatment by a specialist doctor, it is fine with me that the consultation is carried out via video telephone”

Statement 2

“I don’t feel safe receiving consultation via video telephone”

Questionnaire Results

Use of video telephone

Feel safe: 45%. Don't feel safe: 55% (n=1915)

Significant higher reluctance:

- Women
- With age
- The lower the education level

No difference

- Place (Ærø or Odense)

Questionnaire Results

Foreign X-ray evaluation (eHealth question 2)

Which do you agree with most?

Statement 1

“If I could get a faster treatment in Denmark, it is fine with me that it is a doctor in a foreign hospital who evaluates my X-rays”

Statement 2

“I don’t feel safe that it is a doctor in a foreign hospital who evaluates my X-rays”

Questionnaire Results

Foreign X-ray evaluation

Feel safe: 72%. Don't feel safe: 28% (n=1923)

Significant higher reluctance:

- Women
- 70-80 aged
- The lower the education level
- Odense

Questionnaire Results

Migration and eHealth, Ærø (N=912)

		Attitude towards use of video telephone		Total
		Positive	Negative	
Consider moving if transport time to GP increases	Yes	4%	5%	9%
	No	39%	52%	91%
		42%	58%	100%

Questionnaire Results

Migration and eHealth, Årø (N=915)

		Attitude towards foreign X-ray evaluation		Total
		Positive	Negative	
Consider moving if nearest hospital closes	Yes	21%	8%	29%
	No	53%	18%	71%
		74%	26%	100%

Interviews

Migration motives

- Respondents were asked to mention up to five reasons for moving
- In total, 95 reasons were mentioned by 43 respondents.

Interviews, results

- Main reasons for rural-urban migration: Family and friends; education; closer to cultural and leisure time activities; less transport
- Main reasons for urban-rural migration: Family and friends; live in calm surroundings close to nature; born or raised there
- Nobody mentioned access to health care as a cause!

Interviews, results

- When asked explicitly, 2 rural-urban and 5 urban-rural migrants said that they had considered health care before moving
- When asked explicitly, 1 rural-urban and 2 urban-rural migrants said that access to health care services had been a part of migration *causes*

Final conclusions

1. Settlement motives in general

- Multiple factors determine place of settlement
- Urban settlement motives: job, education, culture
- Rural settlement motives: nature, native home
- Two different lifestyles

Final conclusions

2. The role of access to health care for settlement decisions - a mixed picture

- No importance for current settlement
- Low importance for actual moves
- Rather high when measured on presumed action

Final conclusions

3. Attitudes towards eHealth solutions

- Respondents are generally positive

Final conclusions

4. Can eHealth counteract rural migration?

- Yes, it seems possible to some extent.
- Providing that...
 - People will in fact migrate due to cutbacks, as some threaten to do
 - Patients are not more reluctant towards eHealth than they express
 - And, of course, eHealth solutions are technically feasible