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**POSTER ABSTRACT****Exploration of the potentially effective elements within the policy concept of caring neighbourhoods in addressing and preventing loneliness**23<sup>rd</sup> International Conference on Integrated Care, Antwerp, Flanders, 22-24 May 2023Lise Switsers<sup>1</sup>, Dorien Gryp, Leen Heylen<sup>1</sup>: Thomas More Kempen vzw, Mobilab & Care, Geel, Belgium

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Loneliness does not only occur later in life; children, adolescents and adults can also experience loneliness during their lifetime. Loneliness leads to a variety of short- and long-term negative health effects. Given those negative effects, there has been an increased demand to introduce interventions that reduce loneliness. Furthermore, recently different scholars make a plea from loneliness reduction to loneliness prevention.

Today, one of the Flemish government's strategies in addressing and preventing loneliness is the development of caring neighbourhoods (1). The neighbourhood can play a role in addressing loneliness (2). A caring neighbourhood is not a fixed prescribed model, it is a policy concept. It is a systemic approach for greater quality of life, better health, social cohesion and resilience within a defined neighbourhood (3). At the Flemish policy level, a caring neighbourhood, as a guiding policy concept, is understood "as a neighbourhood where conditions are met so that people, regardless of age and large or small support needs in multiple life domains, can continue to live comfortably in their own home or within a familiar neighbourhood. A neighbourhood where people of all ages, young and older adults live together, where people feel good and safe, where quality of life is central, where residents know and help each other, where people and families receive the support they need, and where services and facilities are accessible and available to all" (3, p. 5). In the neighbourhood, many volunteers, caregivers and other organizations can play a role and can respond to signs of loneliness. In a caring neighbourhood, everyone should have the opportunity to participate actively (1).

Over the years, a wide range of loneliness interventions, especially for older adults, have been developed. Recently, several reviews and meta-analyses are published in order to investigate the effectiveness of different intervention and prevention strategies to alleviate loneliness within all ages.

Within this study, we look at the effective elements of different intervention strategies to reduce and prevent loneliness and to what extent they correspond to the objectives of a caring neighbourhood. We conducted an explorative literature search on Pubmed, Web of science and Google scholar and included 13 reviews or meta-analyses. The study selection criteria included reviews of intervention studies to reduce or prevent loneliness in all age-groups. Furthermore, these reviews also needed to scientifically evaluate the effective elements of these interventions.

The results of this exploratory research open the debate on the potential and limits of caring neighbourhoods in order to reduce and prevent loneliness. The discussion develops the argument that in order to combat and prevent loneliness, the development of caring neighbourhoods is relevant but should not be overidealized.

1.Flemish government. Flemish loneliness plan. 2022

2.Newall NEG, Menec VH. Targeting Socially Isolated Older Adults: A Process Evaluation of the Senior Centre Without Walls Social and Educational Program. J Appl Gerontol [Internet]. 2015 Dec 1 [cited 2022 Nov 30];34(8):958–76.

3.Flemish government, Department of Welfare, Public Health and Family. Inspiration framework at project call for caring neighbourhoods. 2021. Available from: [https://www.zorgenvoormorgen.be/sites/default/files/media/20210610\\_inspiratiekader\\_FINAAL.pdf](https://www.zorgenvoormorgen.be/sites/default/files/media/20210610_inspiratiekader_FINAAL.pdf)