How do older persons and their relatives present their needs when applying for home care? How are their requests handled and processed into cases by care managers? Do all requests result in formal assessments or are some needs re-negotiated throughout the process? This study concerns the assessment processes older persons undergo in order to get access to home care. These processes were studied from a discourse analytical perspective and the aim was to investigate how older persons, their relatives and care managers organize their interactions, how this is documented and the significance this had for the decisions that are made.

The study shows that the assessment meetings worked as formal problem-solving events. The older person’s accounts were negotiated discursively in interaction and applicants were processed into clients through a bureaucratic handling especially evident in the transfer that occurs from talk to text. The needs of older persons were added and negotiated away within the boundaries of the existing organizational framework. From the results of they study it is concluded that the introduction of rules-based care management models in the assessment process are difficult to combine with a “care rationale” approach.

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