

A Study on Policy Texts Related to Geriatric Cognitive Impairment in China from the Perspective of Policy Instrument Theory

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Abstract: By analyzing the policy texts in the field of geriatric cognitive impairment in China and studying the distribution characteristics of various policy instruments, this paper can better assist society and the government in adjusting problems in management from a policy perspective, and help more elderly patients have a better social environment. The various policy instruments include environmental, supply-side, and demand-side types, each with different proportions. Through analyzing these proportions and balancing the application of the three types of instruments, the quality and effectiveness of social management for geriatric cognitive impairment can be improved.

Keywords: Policy Instrument Theory; Geriatric Cognitive Impairment; Policy Texts

1. Introduction

With the increasing aging of the population, an analysis of common diseases among the elderly in recent years shows that cognitive impairment, dementia, and other conditions are the most prevalent. The growing number of patients with these conditions not only endangers the physical and mental health of the elderly but also imposes an increasingly heavy burden on their family members who take care of them. Currently, research on geriatric cognitive impairment mainly focuses on influencing factors, rehabilitation training, and intervention measures. From the perspective of policy instruments, this paper summarizes and analyzes policy texts in this field, identifies the advantages and characteristics of various policies, and further provides reference materials for the improvement of the field of geriatric cognitive impairment in society.

2. Research Content of Policy Texts Related

to Geriatric Cognitive Impairment in China from the Perspective of Policy Instrument Theory

Data were collected and integrated from the official websites of multiple ministries and commissions under the State Council, including the Chinese Government Network, the National Health Commission, and the Ministry of Civil Affairs. Keywords such as "geriatric cognitive impairment", "dementia", and "senile dementia" were used for retrieval to obtain relevant policy documents, which served as the core research objects of this study. The research time span was from January 2012 to December 2022, and a total of 59 policy documents were finally included in this study. These 59 policy documents were coded into 103 items, and a framework was constructed and analyzed from the X-dimension and Y-dimension. The X-dimension classifies policy instruments into three types: environmental, supply-side, and demand-side. Environmental instruments refer to policies used by the government for goal-setting, financial support, and other measures to build an external environment. Supply-side instruments involve supporting and supplying three key factors: human resources, financial resources, and material resources, with the government acting as a provider. Demand-side instruments focus on effectively stimulating society's engagement in the management and prevention of geriatric cognitive impairment. The Y-dimension analyzes and pre-manages policies related to geriatric cognitive impairment from three perspectives: structure, process, and outcome. "Structure" refers to the organizational setup of management objects. "Process" includes the operational activities and their effects, such as the quality of care provided by nursing staff to elderly patients with cognitive impairment. "Outcome" refers to the evaluation of medical services. The distribution of policy instruments from the X-dimension is shown in Table 1, and the

distribution of the X-dimension within the Y-dimension is shown in Table 2. An analysis of these two dimensions enables a better

understanding of the content reflected in China's current policy texts related to geriatric cognitive impairment.

Table 1. Distribution of Policy Instruments from the X-dimension

Type of Policy Instrument	Name of Policy Instrument	Number of Policies	Percentage (%)
Environmental	Goal-setting Planning	24	23.30
	Financial Support	1	0.97
	Regulatory Measures	4	4.85
	Strategic Measures	15	14.56
	Organizational Guarantee	6	5.83
Supply-side	Capital Investment	4	3.88
	Education and Training	10	9.70
	Institution Establishment	1	0.97
	Talent Development	8	7.76
	Public Service Investment	10	9.70
	Infrastructure Construction	1	0.97
	Information Support	2	1.94
Demand-side	Government Procurement	1	0.97
	Experience Demonstration	15	14.56

Table 2. Distribution of the X-Dimension within the Y-dimension

X-dimension	Instrument Name	Structure		Process		Outcome	
		n	%	n	%	n	%
Environmental	Goal-setting Planning	23	23.30	0	0.00	1	0.97
	Financial Support	1	0.97	0	0.00	0	0.00
	Regulatory Measures	0	0.00	4	3.88	0	0.00
	Strategic Measures	0	0.00	17	16.5	0	0.00
	Organizational Guarantee	6	5.83	0	0.00	0	0.00
Supply-side	Capital Investment	0	0.00	5	4.85	0	0.00
	Education and Training	0	0.00	11	10.68	0	0.00
	Institution Establishment	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	0.97
	Talent Development	8	7.76	0	0.00	0	0.00
	Public Service Investment	10	9.70	0	0.00	0	0.00
	Infrastructure Construction	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	0.97
	Information Support	0	0.00	2	1.94	0	0.00
Demand-side	Government Procurement	1	0.97	0	0.00	0	0.00
	Experience Demonstration	0	0.00	0	0.00	14	13.59
Total	-	49	48.53	39	37.86	17	16.50

3. Discussion on the Study of Policy Texts Related to Geriatric Cognitive Impairment in China from the Perspective of Policy Instrument Theory

3.1 Supply-Side Instruments

The core content of supply-side instruments lies in the promotion of policies on geriatric cognitive impairment and the cultivation of more outstanding professional nursing staff—both of which are crucial for achieving the goal of geriatric cognitive impairment management. Investment in public services provides an important guarantee for society to carry out

geriatric cognitive impairment management. However, the lack of infrastructure construction and insufficient capital investment have led to slow progress in the prevention and treatment of geriatric cognitive impairment. As a key driving factor in addressing geriatric cognitive impairment, capital investment directly promotes the improvement of social management capabilities. Therefore, it is necessary to increase investment to ensure sufficient social capital supply. Especially in the current era of health informatization construction, as we move toward a new era of nationwide health informatization, the number of instruments must align with China's national

conditions of vigorously promoting informatization. This will help provide more service platforms for the elderly with cognitive impairment, enhance the availability of services for this group, and create a better service environment [2].

At the same time, a corresponding prevention and treatment environment should be established to promote higher-quality development of research in this field. From the perspective of supply-side instruments, it is also necessary to consider the communication between nursing staff, family members, and patients to build a good nurse-patient relationship. Nursing staff should educate patients and their family members about the disease, using various media formats such as graphics, videos, and audio in the multimedia age to help family members understand the warning signs of cognitive impairment, treatment plans, and key nursing points. It is important to emphasize that building a family knowledge system during the patient's treatment is also an indispensable part of society. Family members should be reminded to supervise patients to take medications on time and in the correct dosage to ensure the effective implementation of treatment plans. Additionally, dietary and exercise interventions should be implemented to reflect the positive social atmosphere. Personalized exercise plans should be developed based on the patient's physical condition, encouraging patients to participate in regular group activities with other patients—including aerobic exercises such as jogging, walking, and tai chi. Participation in outdoor social activities helps create a positive rehabilitation atmosphere, comprehensively improves the current psychological state of patients, and contributes to the achievement of regional governance goals.

3.2 Environmental Instruments

An analysis of Table 1 and Table 2 shows that environmental instruments account for the highest proportion (49.51%) among the three types of policy instruments. This fully reflects the degree of attention China pays to the field of geriatric cognitive impairment prevention and treatment at this stage, as well as the key guidelines and goals of its work [2]. From a demand-oriented perspective, it illustrates that the Chinese government has extensively applied scientific management, internal planning, and

strategic instruments based on guiding concepts. Compared with developed countries, China is still in the initial stage of geriatric cognitive impairment care, community-based elderly care, and long-term care services, with family care remaining the primary form of support.

Therefore, it is necessary to learn from, draw on, and analyze the excellent experiences of other countries, and establish more inclusive community-based services. Patients, family members, and nursing staff should be encouraged to build long-term care service relationships, and the content of care services should be optimized to accelerate the formulation and improvement of the elderly care system for cognitive impairment and relevant social knowledge systems. An age-friendly society characterized by mutual assistance should be constructed to create a positive social atmosphere [3].

3.3 Demand-side Instruments

Demand-side instruments mainly reflect how the government exerts and strengthens its role in market regulation. In recent years, although the Chinese government has issued many policy documents to encourage various enterprises in society to actively participate in the prevention and management of geriatric cognitive impairment, the resulting benefits have been relatively limited. Demonstration-based instruments account for only 13.59% of all policy instruments [4]. While these instruments contribute to the development of the social management system for geriatric cognitive impairment, their role remains relatively weak and requires further exploration.

Currently, links such as government procurement and experience demonstration are still underdeveloped and require strengthened management. Efforts should be made to meet market demands while enhancing the driving role of market forces in the prevention and treatment of geriatric cognitive impairment. Through supplementary demand measures, the unique role of market research should be brought into play to significantly improve the quality of market development and regulation, and fully demonstrate its regulatory role in the market [5].

4. Conclusion

In summary, analyzing policy texts from the perspective of Policy Instrument Theory helps

to identify the existing problems in China's current management of geriatric cognitive impairment and determine how to address these problems. Instruments such as experience demonstration can be applied at the outcome level to stimulate market vitality, create a better market environment, and make more elderly patients with cognitive impairment and their family members feel the care of society. This will further strengthen social support and improve the overall effectiveness of social development and construction.

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