

**AGEING IN SPAIN:
HOW DO OLDER
BRITISH MIGRANTS
IN SPAIN ACCESS
CARE AND SUPPORT
IN THE FOURTH
AGE?**

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MY RESEARCH

- Research Questions:
- What are the strategies used by older British migrants to access care and support in Spain?
- To what extent are care strategies transnational?

168,000 Pensioners in Spain

<http://www.yourviva.com/life-in-spain/healthcare-in-southern-s>



THE BRITISH COMMUNITY



<http://www.thefirstpost.com/2016/10/12/retirees-to-spain-in-exchange-for-young-spanish-workers/>

<http://www.fincacortesin.com/golf>



TRANSNATIONAL LIFESTYLES

- Strong national identity among retired migrants (Lundstrom, 2018)
- Reproduction of 'Britishness' outside of homeland.
- 'Double presence' (Bolzman, 2017) - simultaneously living here and there.
- Expectations around ongoing mobility – being able to return any time.
- Lifestyle 'mobility' (Duncan, Cohen and Thulemark, 2015)

GROWING OLD...

- However, growing old brings increased frailty and declining mobility.
- 'Home' as a place of safety and security in old age (*Oliver, 2017*)
- 'To stay or to go' – 'lifestyle mobility' no longer an option

BREXIT UNCERTAINTY

- Welfare exportability...
- Healthcare – reciprocal in the EU
- Pension increments
- Attendance Allowance
- Exchange rates
- Is return the only option?



DATA COLLECTION

- Feb 2019. Interviews with 34 older British migrants in Spain.
- Aged 58-95 years. Average age 77.6 years.
- 16 married, 2 single, 13 widowed, 3 divorced.
- 10 Male, 24 Female
- Time in Spain from 3 to 47 years. Average 18.4 years.
- All live in the Costa del Sol.
- Mix of people who receive care, unpaid (family) carers.
- Focus on care in the home - 2 in supported living, one in a Residencia.

THE MIXED ECONOMY OF CARE

State

Market

Voluntary

Family

CARE FROM THE STATE

- **Healthcare**

- Currently exportable under EU reciprocal agreements
- Healthcare in Spain is reported to be ‘excellent’
- Some do not register in Spain to retain their rights to the UK NHS

- **Social Care**

- Limited aftercare/community care.
- Language barriers

- **Financial Support**

- Exportable Attendance Allowance

In Spain all they say is family... your family must look after you, which they do. The social system here is so in the dark ages, there is no palliative care as such and what there is, is not worth having.

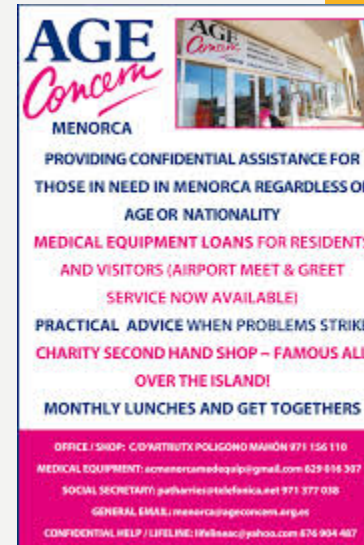
PRIVATE CARE

- Use private carers for
 - Long-term care/support in the home – personal care, shopping, transport (to hospital), translation
 - Social support
 - Aftercare (temporary)
 - Respite for carers
 - Care during a stay in hospital.
- British or English speaking only
- Some are registered – others are informally arranged.

He works
privately.
Whether it's
official or not
I don't know.

THE (BRITISH) VOLUNTARY SECTOR

- Volunteers play an active role in supporting older British people in Spain.
 - Transport to hospitals/doctors
 - Translation
 - Hospital visits
 - Social support – coffee mornings, trips
 - Shopping



- Arrange and even pay for care. e.g. Age Care Association works closely with a (British run) private care agency.
 - Negotiate cheaper rates for less well off.
 - Organise and pay for care



THE BRITISH COMMUNITY

- Importance of British friends in Spain
 - *When I go in to have my hip done, a friend who has a holiday home here she's going to come and live with me for 2 weeks*
- Wider community networks – ‘friend of a friend’ that helps out, passing on information and contacts
 - *I arranged somebody to go with her [to the hospital], one of these people who, the English Bookshop know everybody, and I got somebody to go with her.*
- But friends can only do so much....

TRANSNATIONAL FAMILIES

- Children in UK care for parents in Spain (aftercare)

My son had been over to help with [husband] because he had to be looked after while I was in hospital.... and then my daughter was coming the next week so [son] could go home. When [son] was here on his own, he'd be changing my nappy and God knows what, and that was such a shock. He thought he's going to look after his dad and he had to look after me as well. It was awful.

THE COMPLEXITY OF TRANSNATIONAL CARE

Anne's Story (aged 70)

- Cares for her husband who has dementia in Spain
- Until last year also had to care for her 99 year old mother in the UK
- Her own health/mobility also declined over the last few years

I used to have to go over to England twice a year because my mother was in a home. She lived to 99 and she died last year, and I had to get special assistance at the last few ones because of my leg. Other than that, I've done over 16 years to see her. I've got a nephew who looked after my mother on my behalf and I see him when I go over...

when I had to go to England to see my mother, [daughter and sons] used to come over and look after [husband].... He's got dementia, and so I can't leave him.

MOVING TO SPAIN TO RECEIVE CARE

Jane, aged 74, moved to Spain in 1972. In 2016 she brought her now 95 year old mother to Spain as there was no other family in the UK. Her mother lives in a Spanish Residencia (care home) which she dislikes. She now feels 'stuck' in Spain.

“it was at the time what we thought was a good idea... I think she wasn't 100% happy, but then it just carried on really, and then it was too, then the thought of making another move back was too difficult”.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

- **Complexity of accessing care and support** in Spain
 - Minimal contact with Spanish social services
 - Reliance on British private carers
 - (British) Voluntary sector in Spain is crucial to support vulnerable older people
 - Importance of the British community/friends for information and practical support
- **Transnational family care** works only for low levels of need (emotional support, financial support, one off hospital stay)
 - BUT proximity is important when it comes to long term care.
 - Returning to the UK an option for some (and even part of the 'retirement plan')
 - Others depend on informal support in Spain