

Health Issues of the Elderly & Health Quality

İleri Yaş Sağlık Sorunları ve Yaşam Kalitesi

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ABSTRACT The geriatric population is growing in Turkey. Elderly population is predicted to be 9 % in 2025. New approaches for the increasing elderly population is needed in order to let them have healthier and active lives. Successful aging can come true only in the comprehensive perspicacity, which has socioeconomical, psychological and medical dimensions. In older people, the characteristics of diseases include: the existence of multiple pathology; atypical presentation; presence of chronic and degenerative conditions and combination of physical, functional, mental and social problems. Therefore, in the elderly, a holistic approach is essential to provide an evaluation of organ systems and physical, mental, psychological, socioeconomic efficiency. In other words, the health status of the elderly must be taken into account by integral wholeness, instead of biological systems. Comprehensive assessment can be successful with interdisciplinary team management where the elderly and the family is in the center.

Key Words: Aged; geriatric assessment; health; quality

ÖZET Türkiye'de yaşlı nüfusu giderek artmaktadır. 2025 yılında toplam nüfusun % 9'unun 65 yaş üstü olması beklenmektedir. Tüm dünyada, hem gerçek hem de oransal olarak artış gösteren yaşlı toplumlarının daha sağlıklı ve üretken bir yaşam sürebilmeleri için yeni yaklaşımlara gereksinim vardır. Başarılı yaşlanma ancak gündelik hayatın sosyo-ekonomik, psikolojik ve sağlık boyutlarını kuşatan bütüncül kavrayış içinde gerçekleşebilmektedir. Yaşlılarda; kronik ve dejeneratif hastalıklar zemininde çoklu patoloji, atipik prezentasyon vardır. Fiziksel, işlevsel, mental ve sosyal sorunların varlığı durumu daha da karmaşık hale getirir. Bu nedenle yaşlı hastalarda organa özgü yaklaşım yerine; organların işlevleri ile birlikte fiziksel, mental, duygusal ve ekonomik yeterliliği de sorgulayan daha bütüncül bir değerlendirmeye gereksinim vardır. Bir başka ifade ile; yaşlı bireyin sağlık durumu, biyolojik sistemler yerine, integral bütünlüğü içinde göz önüne alınmalıdır. Bütüncül Geriatrik Değerlendirme'nin uygulanması ile tanı doğruluğunun ve yaşam kalitesinin artabildiği, tıbbi tedavinin optimize edilerek prognoza katkı sağlanabildiği, yitirilmiş otonominin telafi edilebildiği gösterilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yaşlı; değerlendirme; sağlık; kalite

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The geriatric population is growing in Turkey. While the ratio of the elderly people over 65 years to the overall population was 4.5% in 1990, the ratio reached to 5.9 % in 1998. Elderly population is predicted to be 9% in 2025. In other words, it can be considered that; one in every 10 people is going to be over 65 years, in 2025, in Turkey.¹

AGING BY PRESERVING HEALTH QUALITY

The geriatric population is growing throughout the world by number and ratio. New approaches for the increasing elderly population is needed in order to let them have healthier and active lives. The policy and activities about this area should not be limited only by care and therapy; it should also let them express themselves in the way they've chosen for themselves and, by means of these; they must be given the opportunity to be a positive impact in the society they live and to their family.

In such an available environment, aging successfully means; facing physiological changes approvingly, perceived functional competency - social support, solidarity and friendship between generations, spirituality, having economic independency and interest for spare time, preserving allowance. Successful aging can come true only in the comprehensive perspicacity, which has socioeconomical, psychological and medical dimensions.²

Social gerontology which deals with this multidimensional area covers sociology, anthropology, psychology, informatics and administrative sciences.

GENERAL APPROACH TO THE HEALTH PROBLEMS OF THE ELDERLY

Among geriatric populations, the most common chronic conditions are: rheumatism, hypertension, diabetes mel-

litus, chronic bronchitis, anemia, visual impairments, angina, coronary heart disease, depression, renal and gastrointestinal diseases. These diseases consists 60 % of all disorders seen in the elderly. In older people, the characteristics of diseases include: the existence of multiple pathology where older people could suffer from a number of diseases at the same time, such as hypertension, diabetes, respiratory or cardiac diseases together; atypical presentation or non-specific presentation; prevalence of chronic and degenerative conditions; the presence of combination of physical, functional, mental and social problems.³

Therefore, in the elderly, a holistic approach is essential to provide an evaluation of organ systems and physical, mental, psychological, socioeconomic efficiency. In other words, the health status of the elderly must be taken into account by integral wholeness, instead of biological systems.

Comprehensive assessment can be successful with interdisciplinary team management where the elderly and the family is in the center. While making the future plans the patient and the family must be involved into the procedure. The results of such an individualized comprehensive approach are more successful than total solutions for such a heterogeneous group. In the meta-analyses, it has been shown that by applying comprehensive geriatric assessment; diagnostic accuracy and health quality becomes higher, medical cure can be optimized and contribution to prognosis can be achieved, lost autonomy can be compensated.⁴

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