

Healthy Ageing for Older People

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Abstract

Number of old age people is rapidly increasing both in the developed as well as in the developing countries. Trend of rapidly increasing number of older population emphasizes the need of healthy ageing for the betterment of older. Healthy ageing is a global approach to older people for achieving healthy, productive, safe and fulfilling life. Individual, family and community should focus their effort towards healthy aging so that old age people could have better life in their old age.

Key words: Healthy ageing, Global approach, Older People

Introduction

Global Trend of Ageing Population

In this 21st century, due to effect of advanced science and technology, decreased mortality rates and increasing life expectancies the number of older population is growing rapidly all over the world (UNFPA, 2012). Further, United Nations population division (2010) revealed that there are 800 million 12% people of old age which is expected to increase from 894 million to 2.43 billion by 2050. It indicates that the proportion of the world's population over 60 years will be to 22% by the year 2050. It has been expected that in 2050, this group of the elderly will count approximately to 2 billion.

Trend of Ageing Population in Nepal

In Nepal, according to Nepal Population Report, 2011 the life expectancy of the people was 69 years, which has increased from 54 in the year 1990. During the years 1991-2001, the annual elderly population growth rate was 3.39 percent which was higher than an annual population growth rate 2.3, thus concerns over the health of elderly people is increasing in Nepal with this unprecedented growth of the population.

Meaning and Need of Healthy Ageing

Healthy ageing is a term which is often used interchangeably with others such as positive ageing,

productive ageing, active ageing & successful ageing (Kerchner & Pegues, 1998; WHO, 2002; Bowling, 2008). As there is no universal definition for healthy ageing it is accepted that healthy ageing involves more than just physical or functional health. Nowadays the process of becoming older is often considered to be a phenomenon that brings challenges and opportunities for the quality of life demanding for healthy ageing (Sanders & Cert, 2006).

Productive aging reflect the reality that older people are full of wisdom and experiences, relatively healthy with the potential for maintaining that condition until late in life, capable of making economic and social contributions that benefit themselves, their families, and their communities with the belief that older people need purposeful and meaningful roles and activities in life. A productive aging activity model emphasizes on volunteerism, education, fitness and exercise, leisure, travel and advocacy (Bowling & Ilife, 2006).

Positive ageing is a term used to describe the process of maintaining a positive attitude, feeling good about one self, keeping fit and healthy, and engaging fully in life as people aged (Australian Psychological Association, 2014).

According to WHO (2002) active ageing as the

process of optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age allowing people to realize their potential for physical, social and mental well-being throughout the life course.

Changing Concepts of Healthy Ageing

The concept of successful aging was developed in the 1950s and had been more emphasized in the 1980s. In past, Rowe and Kahn (1987) defined healthy ageing as absence of physical and mental disabilities and having three components: freedom from disease and disability, high cognitive and physical functioning and social and productive engagement. Further, medical model defines successful ageing as a freedom from chronic diseases and the ability to continue to function effectively, both physically and mentally in old age (Britton & Singh, 2008).

At present days, researchers on successful aging acknowledge the facts that there are a growing number of older adults who are functioning at a high level and contributing to the society. Researchers are seeking explanations to differentiate successful ageing from usual aging. Majority of older people rated themselves as aging successfully, even when they did not meet all objective physical and mental criteria for successful aging. Subjective quality of life is strongly tied with psychosocial protective traits such as resilience, optimism, and mental and emotional wellbeing (Jeniffer, Sengupta, Depp, Palinkas, & Dilip 2010; Lamond et al., 2008). Studies which incorporated the perspectives of older adults into the model of successful aging have found that optimism, effective coping styles, and social and community involvement are more important to aging successfully than traditional measures of health and wellness (Garcia et al., 2011; Danyuthasilpe et al ., 2009 ; Buys & Miller, 2006).

Components of Healthy Ageing

In 1987, Rowe and Khan characterized successful aging as involving components which includes:

- (1) Freedom from disease and disability
- (2) High cognitive and physical functioning
- (3) Social and productive engagement

Nowadays, it has been noticed that some components of successful aging have been modified by different health agencies. According to Alberta Health

Wellness & Alberta seniors, 2012 conceptual model of healthy ageing includes four components.

- (1) Promoting health and preventing diseases and injury
- (2) Optimizing mental and physical function
- (3) Managing chronic conditions
- (4) Engaging with life

Enabling Healthy Ageing

According to WHO, Active ageing framework determinants of health are interrelated for enabling healthy ageing (WHO, 2002). Some of these determinant are within the control of the individual, usually refers to as health habits, lifestyle and others outside the individual factors like gender role & cultural factors. Social determinants of health such as income and education influence the choices that individuals make and create life circumstances which affect overall health of older adults.

Right Based Approaches to Address Healthy Ageing

Five principles identified by the UN is the strategic approach to address healthy ageing which includes:

- (1) Dignity: Being treated with respect, regardless of situation, and having a sense of self-esteem.
- (2) Independence: Being in control of one's life, being able to do as much for oneself as possible and making one's own choices.
- (3) Participation: Getting involved, staying active and taking part in the community, being consulted and having one's views considered by government.
- (4) Fairness: Having seniors real needs, in all their diversity, considered equally.
- (5) Security: Having adequate income as one age and having access to a safe and supportive living environment.

Nepal Government Policy for promoting Healthy Ageing

The government of Nepal had started plans, policies and programmers for family-based security system to enable elderly to lead a dignified life since the Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-2002). Also the government had adopted the policy of active aging set by WHO in the year 2002 in its Tenth Plan (2002-2007) for

senior citizens. Since then many initiatives have been taken focusing on health sectors and in social security services (Sharma & Nepal, 2007).

Role of Geriatric Nurse for Healthy Ageing:

Key concept of role of geriatric nurse focuses on maintenance of independence, preventing risk to health and wellbeing, establishing meaningful lifestyles and developing self care strategies for elderly people (Eliopoulos, 2005). These roles include:

- (1) Prevention: Screening and early detection of age associated disease conditions.
- (2) Health promotion: Education and activity to prevent & limit the effects of disease among old age people.
- (3) Assist in age related changes and development.
- (4) Advocate government regarding policy which includes social programs, affordable housing, transportation, safe neighborhoods and nutrition programs for addressing needs of older people.
- (5) Get involved in professional organizations. Develop, implement and evaluate programmes and policies which promote healthy ageing.

Responsibilities for Healthy Ageing in Different Level:

As remaining healthy is a strategic approach these responsibilities need to be prioritized and exercised in different level (Pacuusi, 2008; Gautam, 2009) which includes:

Individual Level: Healthy ageing 10 tips for

- (1) Live an active life: Focuses on activities the elderly individual can do (e.g. walk instead of job, plant in a flower box rather than a big garden).
- (2) Eat healthy diet
- (3) Get adequate rest and sleep
- (4) Practice skills to adapt in environment (e.g. doing simple household works)
- (5) Compensate or adapt to overcome obstacles

(e.g. use assistance devices, make lists of required things)

- (6) Practice disease prevention activities like yoga, light exercise
- (7) Maintain your cognitive level: Exercise self, family and of community problem solving activities in your level
- (8) Find ways to reduce your stress level.
- (9) Enhance quality of life through social engagement (Friends, neighbors, relatives etc.)
- (10) Maintain community involvement.

Family Level

- (1) Identify the health care needs and problems of old age people.
- (2) Provide supportive environment which would be supportive and friendly to them.

Community Level

- (1) Promote health access to elderly geriatrics through welfare clinics for elderly, supply of trained care taker for rehabilitation.
- (2) Promote healthy and supportive environment which increase healthy ageing such as chronic care management activities, health promotional activities such as yoga, pleasant exercise, provision of well facilitated geriatric centers and old age home.

Conclusion

Healthy ageing is a global approach to older people for achieving healthy, productive, safe and fulfilling life. Different health strategies have been implemented in different level for the promotion of health of their senior citizens for healthy ageing. Individual, family and community should focus their effort towards active aging so that older people could have better life their old age.

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