

PROMOTING THE WELFARE OF THE ELDERLY

Presented by

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DEFINITION: *Age/Elderly is defined as those people above the age of 65 years. They have passed middle age and are approaching later stages of life.*

INTRODUCTION:

Ageing is a normal, natural, inevitable, biological process. It is an unpreventable and incurable state which can be protected, promoted and extended. Improvement in medical sciences, social condition and standard of living has led to an increased life expectancy which has led to an increased life expectancy which has led to an increase in the number of the aged in many parts of the world especially the developed regions. Although sub-saharan Africa's elderly population is not as large as in other regions of the world, it must be considered as a potential cause of concern. The number of Africans 60 years and over will increase by a factor 4.4 from 22, 9 million in 1980 to 101.9 million in 2025. the population of Africa's elderly population 65 years and over on average, starts at about 3% and is expected to increase enormously by 2025. The sub-saharan Africa's elderly population will increase by about 93% between 2000 and 2020. The most rapid growth is expected in Western and Northern Africa whose elderly populations are projected to increase by a factor of nearly 5 between 1980 and 2025. In western Africa, the older population in Cote d'Ivoire is expected to increase by a factor of 5.4 and in Cape Verde by a factor of 5.3 during this period. It is also important to note that the members of the very old in Africa will also grow at a very fast rate. Consequently, between 1980 and 2025, the 75 years and over age group will increase by 434 percent in East Africa. 365 percent in Central Africa. 427 percent in Northern Africa and 526 percent in Western Africa, Nigeria, in West Africa, will be among the countries in Africa that will experience very large increases in this group.

Another distinct feature of the ageing situation in Africa, is that a large proportion of the elderly people live and work in the rural areas. It is estimated that by the year 2020, approximately 64% of Africa's elderly will live in areas defined as rural.

Also of significance, is the fact that most of the elderly population will be made up of women. United Nations projections indicate that between 1985 and 2025, those age 70 years and above will increase by 32 million males and 38 million females in the developed world, and 284 million males and 317 million females in the developing world.

In recognition of the increasing numbers of elderly people in the world, the World Health Organization designated 1999 as the international year of older persons and the theme of the 1999 World Health Day was 'Active Ageing'

CLASSIFICATION OF THE ELDERLY

- Elderly fit; Those elders do not have classical symptoms of illness. They are therefore referred to as being fit or healthy.
- Elderly sick; This can be acute or chronic illness. It can be as a result of medical problems that are specifically associated with old age or otherwise.
- Special groups e.g. the blind, deaf etc.

AGEING PROCESS

The actual onset of old age is unknown although an arbitrary age has been defined by the World Health Organization. Activities during the old age varies from individual to individual and depend largely on how well the person planned for old age in addition to other environmental factors that may play a part.

PROBLEMS OF THE ELDERLY

These are largely classified as:

- Medical
- Social

MEDICAL PROBLEMS OF THE ELDERLY

This affects all systems in the body i.e from head to toes. Examples include:

- Baldness, senile dementia, loss of persistent concentration, Glaucoma, Cataract, Alzheimer's disease of the heart and blood vessels. Cerebrovascular disease
- Emphysema, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Airway Disease, Osteoarthritis, Osteoporosis, Myositis, Fibrositis, Spondylitis, Caprosite, Benign Prostatic Hypertrophy, Uterus Vagina Prolapse, Urinary incontinence, etc.
- Malnutrition: Vitamin Deficiency, Anaemia
- Increased mental fatigue
- Increased difficulty in solving problems
- Impaired coordination of fine work

SOCIAL PROBLEMS OF THE ELDERLY

- Poverty
- Unemployment, many of them are retired from service and hence do not have means of livelihood
- Loneliness; The children would have left home and the parents are left alone to take care of themselves
- Separation (loss of family, or friends)
- Insomnia; inability to sleep very well
- Anxiety; over children, friends and relatives
- Increased leisure time
- Increase dependency

CARE OF THE ELDERLY

- Individual

- Family
- Community
- Government

INDIVIDUAL

- An individual that has properly planned for the old age will have less problems. Proper planning will involve
- Investments especially in the children.
- Correct lifestyles e.g. good habits like avoiding alcohol and cigarette smoking
- Continued involvement with family, community, club and a religious organization.
- Regular medical examinations.

FAMILY

- Regular financial support
- Regular visit/phone call to and from them
- Organize home helps/health visitors

COMMUNITY

- From elderly men and women associations and organize programmes that can allow for gist, old time tales and various forms of activities that can make life interesting for them.
- Local welfare authority; organize home visiting and clubs. Presentation of programmes by the youths.
- Local housing authority; building hostels, old people's homes etc.

GOVERNMENT/NON GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS:

- Sponsor or reimburse programmes organized by the elderly in the community
- Organize programmes for the elderly
- Organize programmes that educate people on how plan for old age
- Delay retiring age if possible
- Establish geriatric clinic in all the primary health centres and training of primary health care workers in the care of the elderly.
- Free health care for all elderly
- Old peoples homes in all local government which is sponsored or subsidized by the government
- Day care centres with good meals and recreation facilities
- Prompt payment of ENTITLEMENTS
- Good pension schemes
- Public enlightenment campaigns to increase public awareness about the aged and their needs
- Introduction of geriatrics into the post graduate and undergraduate medical curriculum of the medical schools in Nigeria.

CONCLUSION:- Old age is inevitable. Lets all work together to make old age attractive and not miserable.

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