



GOOD HEALTH ADDS YEARS TO LIFE: WORLD HEALTH DAY THEME 2012!!

DR. TODKAR S.S.(MD, COMMUNITY MEDICINE)

Assistant Professor: Dept. of Community Medicine, Dr. V. M. Govt. Medical College Solapur-413003, Maharashtra, India.

ABSTRACT

Introduction: Old age is normal, inevitable biological phenomenon through which everyone has to pass and nothing can be done to stop it!¹ But off course we can extend it and live longer by changing our life styles and adopting the good habits like daily aerobic exercise avoiding smoking and alcohol etc. WHO theme for this year is Ageing and Health i.e. **“Good Health adds years to life!”**² The world is rapidly ageing. This represents both challenges and opportunities for us. The ageing process is a natural one, and it is said that old age is a incurable disease. Sir James Sterling Ross says: you do not heal the old age, you protect it, promote it, & extend it!¹

The ageing of population represents an opportunity for societies. If older people can retain their health, and if they live in an environment that promotes their active participation, their experience, skills and wisdom will be without any doubts a resource for societies. So this article highlights the current situation of old age people with their health problems and the way to live it gracefully!

Key Words : old age, good health, ageing etc.

INTRODUCTION

Old age is normal, inevitable biological phenomenon through which everyone has to pass and nothing can be done to stop it!¹ But off course we can extend it and live longer by changing our life styles and adopting the good habits like daily aerobic exercise avoiding smoking and alcohol etc. WHO theme for this year is Ageing and Health i.e. **“Good Health adds life to years!”**² The world is rapidly ageing. This represents both challenges and opportunities for us. The ageing process is a natural one, and it is said that old age is a incurable disease. Sir James Sterling Ross says: you do not heal the old age; you protect it, promote it, & extend it!¹

The ageing of population represents an opportunity for societies. If older people can retain their health, and if they live in an

environment that promotes their active participation, their experience, skills and wisdom will be without any doubts a resource for societies.

The challenges due to ageing worldwide: -³

The fast ageing of populations around the world is presenting challenges for developed and developing countries. These include:

- Strains on pension and social security systems;
- Increasing demand for health care;
- Bigger need for trained-health workforce in gerontology;
- Increasing demand for long-term care, particularly in dealing with dementia; and

- The raising of pervasive ageism that denies older people the rights and opportunities available for other adults.

These challenges can be overcome by implementing the following measures.

Ensuring that older population to have a basic level of financial security:-

Tax-free pensions that provide basic support to vulnerable older people are an effective way of helping them avoid poverty.

Developing age-friendly environments:-

For any given level of physical limitation, a key determinant of an older person's capacity to function is the environment in which they live. The World Health Organization recently commenced a programme designed to foster "age-friendly" environments that encourage "active ageing by optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age".

Availability and accessibility of effective health care:-

In less developed countries, access to basic primary care including the early detection and management of common conditions like hypertension and diabetes can allow older people to maintain their health and capacity to live independently. In developed countries, the feared increase in demand for health care from population ageing is likely to be largely met by economic growth. An integrated continuum of long-term care can support older people to age in place and provide institutional care for those with severe limitation.

Maintaining social patterns that influence the well-being of older adults:-

Many changing social patterns are likely to influence both the behaviours and well being of older people. One common trend during economic development has been for a shift from extended households to more nuclear households comprising one or two generations.

Good health requires the efforts of many people at different levels of society e.g.

1. Governments and society in general: If older people are to remain healthy, the environment in which they live must help them keep healthy. While individuals can take certain steps themselves to keep healthy, there are things over which they have no control. If the air is polluted with poisonous chemicals or food is poisoned with insecticides, it is difficult for an older person to stay healthy

2. Communities: Communities and local governments have a wider responsibility to help people to help themselves. Health workers must be available, and hospitals and medication are required to assist with the health care of older people.

3. Health workers: Even where individuals do all that they can to look after Healthy Ageing themselves, they will still need to receive help from health professionals.

CONCLUSION

The ageing process is a natural. It is inevitable biological phenomenon through which everyone has to pass and nothing can be done to stop it! But we can extend it and live longer by changing our life styles and adopting the good habits like daily aerobic exercise avoiding smoking and alcohol. Many developing countries in the World like India, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Pakistan etc. are facing challenges due fast ageing like financial burden due to social security pension schemes, and more demand for the health care of old people. These challenges can be overcome by ensuring that older population to have a basic level of financial security, Tax-free pensions that provide basic support to vulnerable older people. It is an effective way of helping them avoid poverty, also by developing age-friendly environments & by making availability and accessibility of effective primary health care to the old people. With this we make them to stay happily and more long life!

REFERENCES

1. Kark K; text book of Preventive and social Medicine, 20th edition (2009), Banarsidas Bhanot publishers Nagpur Road Jabalpur India, chapter 10, page 512.
2. Available from internet www.who.int/ageing/events/whd2012/en/index.htm/ accessed on 31/12/2012.
3. www.who.int/ Regional office for western pacific, Healthy ageing practical points on keeping well; World Health organization, Regional office for western pacific. page 6 to 15