

AREA OF RESEARCH REQUIRED IN CARE FOR THE ELDERLY AND IN NURSING EDUCATION



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Today, people live longer as a result of technological advances and life style changes. The predicted graying population scenario will be that the elderly are going to constitute the fastest- growing segment of the society with increase in life expectancy for males being 86yrs and 91yrs for females. There will be a need for health promotion, health protection, housing and social service. There is an urgent need for nursing research to guide practice in this area. Till date, most research has excluded the elderly as subjects owing to the high-risk nature of this population. With appropriate informed consent and access to representatives of the population of elderly will allow studies to be conducted to answer questions related to health of this group protecting elders' rights and the potential success of valuable studies.

Longitudinal studies are needed to determine the efficacy of health promotion activities and the most effective management, from both clinical and economic perspective of major chronic diseases. The unique needs of frail elders and of young healthy elders require broad based research programs. Impact of race and ethnicity on health care practice and problems will be an important area of further studies.

Nursing research should focus on development of knowledge to build the scientific foundation for clinical practice, prevent disease and disability, manage and eliminate symptoms caused by illness, enhance end of life care and palliative care. Studies can be conducted which promote interventions designed to maintain cognitive and physical functioning of older adults. Maximizing patients independence at discharge would include: assist with transition from hospital; to prevent unplanned hospital readmissions customized intervention which could include daily visitors, therapeutic activities to provide mental stimulation, daily exercise and walking assistance; sleep enhancement; nutritional

support and hearing and vision protocols. Care transition research could also focus on difficulties older adults and their caregivers experience during transition from hospital to home.

Research needs to be carried out covering a wide variety of areas and is intended to advance the knowledge and treatment of the more serious conditions affecting older people and to improve their quality of life. Studies can be conducted to understand pharmacological constitution and regimen related to changing and differing physiology and psychology. It's also important to investigate the way older people respond to new drugs.

In psychology, research could focus on cognitive changes such as changes in attention, memory or language associated with the normal ageing process and age related condition of dementia. So that people with cognitive impairment can be helped. Studies could be conducted using (BASQID) the assessment of quality of life in dementia. This is 14 items measure of dementia sensitive quality of life, developed by Dr. Richard Trigg. It would provide information on life satisfaction and feeling positive quality of life.

One could also study "Quality of care and the health needs of the elderly patients", exploratory studies could be conducted on "Taking care of elderly parents", "Problems of the elderly", "Activities for the elderly to stimulate healthy life", "Living with elderly and coping strategies adopted by the family or caregivers", "Ethical and medico-legal issues".

Studies could be conducted to identify how the elders are at times abused Physical, financial, emotional, and sexual or other types of abuses of an older dependent. Studies could be conducted to assess elderly satisfaction of the care received from their children. Role of women as family's caregiver could be explored as in most families it is the women putting more time than men