

REVIEW ARTICLE

Tragedy of Life: Those Days in the Elderly

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ABSTRACT

As a common and universal phenomenon in old-ages of human life, it is urgent to know this fact. Everybody will pass this stage if they are alive. To review sufficient reports on this issue, findings were carried out on their health status first, then their real friends supported at this stage of life. The retired persons who were active through various activities (Plates 3-4), could pass smart time always.

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INTRODUCTION

Elder people are the real assets of a nation. It is the responsibility of everyone to take care of them. The elderly are the last stage of our life cycle and a reality too. Old age is one of the vulnerable situations in a natural process of life. Old age starts after sixty year of age and ends in death. All over the world, the elderly are increasing but children are decreasing. The majority of the people above 60 years old live in rural areas where healthcare services are poor, and job opportunities are very limited. The situation of the elderly is dismal where more than 50% of the elderly are widowed or single [1]. Jobless and agricultural workers were found at 63% and 14-15% respectively. This compares badly with Tehran where 85% elderly are unofficially employed [2]. Demographics of Bangladesh stated that there are 7% of the total population of our country is above 60 years old. Modern society has failed to keep the dignity and honour of the elders. This may be attributed to various reasons like individualistic attitudes, instability of family structures, devaluation of dignity, differences in incomes, and other social problems [3]. The objective of this paper is to focus on the overall problems in old-aged people and then try to recommend a proper guideline for their welfare.

Health Status of Older People

People in western countries are facing older adults with chronic illnesses [4, 5]. Older people encounter heart-related diseases, chronic respiratory diseases, renal problems, and diabetes [6, 7] as well as common illness [8]. Only quitting smoking and losing weight help to avoid serious health risks to be physically active and to eat a healthy diet [9]. Elderly people suffer from cancer in the prostate, lung, stomach, colon, breast, and cervix of the uterus. Arthritis affects 50% of people over 65 years and can lead to pain with lower quality of life. A house-to-house survey of all people (over 60 years) in an urban slum and a village in India found that the use of tobacco was very high 58.9% [10]. The most common mental and neurological disorders in the age group are dementia and depression which affect approximately 5% and 7% of the world's older people [11]. Women are more prone to suffer loneliness and anxiety in their old age [12]. Combined Military Hospital (CMH) of Dhaka found that the majority of elderly patients had diabetes mellitus (21.1%) followed by rheumatoid arthritis (17.6%), asthma (12.5%), cataract (11.2%), ENT (Ear Nose Throat) problem (6.6%), malignancy (5.9%), and benign enlargement of the prostate (5.3%). In old age both females and males, menopause and andropause are common phenomena [13, 14]. In this case, immunity power will deteriorate day by day, so only a healthy lifestyle can support them.

Facilities of Older People

Bangladesh tried to ensure that the children have to take the necessary steps to look after their parents [15]. Many elderly organizations Probin Histoishi Kendra, Probin Hitoishi Sangha, Bangladesh Association for Aged and Institute of Geriatric Medicine (BAAIGM), Welfare Association (Dhaka), Service Center for Elderly People (Rajshahi), Elderly Development Initiative (Manikganj), Senakalyan Sangstha, etc. Our present government launched an old age allowance programme where 33,000,00 people are getting Tk. 500 in each month estimating a total cost of 2,100 crores each year. This is not sufficient for an old individual but it is a boost and hope by the government for the older people [16]. In a study in Dhaka District, only 14% of the elderly showed health insurance policies [17]. World Health Organization recommended age-friendly primary health care centers and separate units in the hospitals. Currently, many older adults receive long-term care reside in their own homes [4, 5, 18].

Pets in Old Age

Many famous people of the world kept pigeons as their favourite pets [19]. Pigeon flying was a great hobby for people in many countries [20]. Three themes can happen in older adults with their pets – attachment, unconditional love, and interdependency [21]. In Western countries, over 50% of households have at least one pet [22, 23]. Many pet owners consider those pets as friends or family members as well [24]. Pets are associated with reduced depression, loneliness, and anxiety, and additionally improve physical activity and social connections [25, 26, 27]. Pets also have negative effects on allergies, vector of diseases, and excessive grief responses after pet bereavement [28, 29, 30]. Older adults said that their pets forced them to get up early in the morning to walk the dog [31 - 41]. Several studies support that especially dogs (Plate 4) reduce feelings of loneliness and facilitate conversations with others [42 - 44].

The Present Situation

Sometimes, this old age is very pathetic to many people with loneliness (Plate 1). At this stage, most of their children were not available with them because of their job place or academic status. Many children are going abroad for higher education, so parents are facing huge loneliness but a hope is that children could try to establish their parents with them abroad. In the last stage, many parents go old-home in the country. Primarily this is an offense. Sometimes parents are alone in their own homes but this is possible to appoint a caretaker in those homes. Educated and physically fit parents could get an advantage in this case.



Plate 1. [45]



Plate 2. [46]



Plate 3. [47]



Plate 4. [48]

CONCLUSIONS

In old age, everybody should maintain their active life with some strengthening exercises. In addition, nutritious and small amounts of frequent food are important. In old age, due to less immunity, many diseases may happen naturally but precautions could help to receive those at a minimum. Pet animals (Plate 4) and agricultural work (Plate 3) would help in rural areas. In old age, friends, family members, and neighbours will come forward to assist them (Plate 2). Many organizations in the county could monitor those old people locally. In educational institutes, we should focus on the responsibility of our senior citizens from childhood. The government and private sectors would continue many welfare-based activities for the happiness of the elderly of society.

In addition, we could suggest to elderly for their happy life –

1. Religious activities are prime in all ages;
2. Walking and relaxing exercise as well as yoga is good [49];
3. Elder people could share their knowledge with family members;
4. Try to make strong bonds with family members;
5. In old age, friends are significant to them;
6. Organize all family documents for their children;
7. Could write an autobiography/biography or books;
8. To observe all previous achievements for inner peace;
9. To fulfill the rest of desires;
10. Try to engage with social welfare organizations;
11. To keep animals and practice gardening;
12. Should follow national and international guidelines [50, 51].

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