

Caring for an Aging Population: Strategies to Improve Quality of Life



Soha Yantani BSN
*MSc. Gerontology
 MSc. Health management
 & Hospital management, ESA
 Human Resources Director
 & Nursing Pole Supervisor
 Elderly Care Center, Ain Wzein
 Medical Village*

Population aging is one of the most significant social transformations of the 21st century. According to the World Health Organization, by 2030, one in every six individuals will be aged 60 or older (WHO, 2024). This transition carries profound implications for healthcare systems, economies, and families. Aging is not a uniform process; it varies significantly across individuals and populations due to genetic, environmental, and socio-economic factors.

Traditionally, age 65 is used to mark the beginning of “older adulthood,” an edge rooted more in retirement norms than biological criteria. However, understanding aging requires a multidimensional perspective considering not only chronological age but also biological and psychological dimensions.

With aging, physical systems undergo various changes. These can lead to functional impairments and an increased risk of chronic diseases such as dementia, heart disease, thyroid disorders, and depression. Notably, symptoms of such conditions often manifest differently or have more severe complications in older populations.

Lebanon is witnessing a rapid rise in its elderly population, with those aged 60 and above expected to more than double from 11.2% in 2020 to 27.1% by 2050 making it the highest in the Arab region. This demographic shift is placing growing pressure on the country’s healthcare and social support systems. Many older adults face financial difficulties and lack sufficient social services, especially as

traditional family support structures have weakened due to the ongoing economic crisis.

The country suffers from a shortage of adequate services for the elderly, including healthcare, home care, and pension systems. As a result, nursing homes have become a critical component of elder care in Lebanon, offering essential services for those with complex medical or social needs particularly when families are unable to provide adequate care.

There are approximately 49 long-term care nursing homes in Lebanon. These facilities house around 4,180 residents, which is less than 1.4% of the total older adult population in Lebanon. These facilities are mainly located in urban areas, with 97% being privately operated and the remainder classified as semi-private. Public nursing homes are rare, though limited financial assistance is provided by the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH), the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA), and, more significantly, by the army sector for its members.

One of the high standard nursing homes in Lebanon is at Ain Wazein Medical Village (AWMV) which is a nonprofit public benefit organization, located in the Chouf area. The ELDERLY CARE CENTER (ECC) at AWMV offers long term medical and nursing services to elderly patients above 60 years old from across Lebanon and provides care for 75 elders, with the following objectives: optimizing the elderly’s health, improving the function of elders to maximize their independence, assisting residents with day to day activities through nursing services, as well as recreational and social activities, providing the best comprehensive services for all medical problems, building expertise of health care practitioners (physicians, nurses, therapists...) in the field of geriatrics and gerontology, and providing a research platform.

Delivering High-Quality, Person-Centered Care

Caring for older adults demands a comprehensive and

individualized approach, grounded in respect for their unique needs, preferences, and dignity. At the heart of this person-centered model are geriatricians and gerontological nurses, whose specialized training equips them to manage the multifaceted challenges of aging with compassion and clinical expertise.

Gerontological nurses play an essential role in this care model. Their responsibilities extend beyond clinical tasks to encompass holistic support for physical, emotional, and social well-being. Key areas of their practice include conducting Comprehensive Geriatric Assessments (CGA), facilitating effective communication, and promoting independence and mobility. They are also instrumental in medication management, nutritional and hydration monitoring, and mental health screening, as well as in implementing fall prevention strategies. Education is also a vital component of their role and they collaborate within interdisciplinary teams, advocate for their patients, and practice with ethical and cultural sensitivity.

Geriatricians bring a new medical approach to aging,

specializing in the management of multiple chronic conditions and the reduction of polypharmacy risks. Their holistic focus emphasizes preserving functional ability and autonomy, rather than simply treating disease. By integrating physical, cognitive, and emotional health, geriatricians help older adults maintain the highest possible quality of life.

Effective elder care relies on diverse assessment tools, concluding in Comprehensive Geriatric Assessment, to guide personalized plans addressing functional, cognitive, psychosocial, physical, and nutritional needs of older adults.

As the global population continues to age, healthcare systems must adapt to meet the evolving needs of older adults. A multidimensional, patient-centered approach led by skilled gerontological nurses and geriatricians is essential. By incorporating comprehensive assessments and addressing the physical, emotional, and social dimensions of aging, we can improve both the quality of care and the quality of life for older adults.

