

Health and Ageing

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Perayaan Sambutan Hari Keputeraan
Kebawah Duli Yang Maha Mulia Paduka Seri Baginda Sultan
dan Yang Di-Pertuan Negara Brunei Darussalam
Yang Ke-66 Tahun

*'Nikmat Kesihatan Asas Kesejahteraan
Negara'*

*'Luxury of Health is the Foundation
Nation's Welfare'*

World Health Day 2012 focused on the care of older adults, emphasising on healthy ageing. This highlighted the common problems faced by older adults and the importance of healthy living through frequent exercise, healthy balanced diets, spending time with families and being active in community activities.

The common questions that arise are "Who is considered as an elderly?" and "When does ageing start?". For statistical purposes, an older adult is someone who is over 60 or 65 years old, depending on individual country demographic. The reality is that ageing starts when one is still a growing foetus in the womb. It is a known fact that adolescent who are obese, are at higher risk for non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as diabetes mellitus and hypertension. Hence, healthy life style should start at the earliest age.

In addition to chronic diseases, older adults are prone to common geriatric syndromes

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(Figure 1). In World Health Day 2012, the World Health Organisation (WHO) highlighted 'The Four Giants of Geriatric' faced by older adult; dementia, depression, falls and incontinence. These common issues are not part of normal ageing that one needs to endure. Older adults who suffer from dementia, depression, falls and incontinence do not have the cardinal signs and symptoms like the common diseases. It is important for health care providers to specifically assess these symptoms as most are potential treatable and controllable. Unfortunately, most issues faced by older adults are usually complex and interact with one another.

The care of the an elderly needs an interdisciplinary team approach encompassing physicians, nurses and allied health care professionals such as medical social workers, physical therapists and occupational therapists. The treatment should focus on patient-centered care by promoting healthy ageing focusing on improving and maintaining functionality, encouraging healthy living at the earliest stage to prevent NCDs and to increase quality of life.

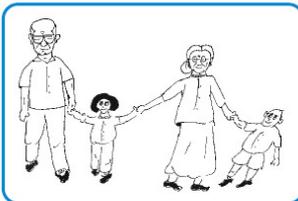
Brunei Darussalam has a population of about 400,000 based on the population census in

Good health adds life to years



Good nutrition throughout life ensures healthy ageing

- Healthy ageing begins in the womb
- Good health of a mother depends on her health in infancy, childhood and adolescence. Ensure good nutrition and education of young and adolescent girls. Educating girls deters early marriage and pregnancy
- Healthy behaviour at a young age leads to a healthy old age
- Investing in health throughout life produces rich benefits for society



Create age-friendly environments that foster the health and participation of older people

- Strong bonding between generations leads to healthy ageing
- Inclusion of older family members in family matters leads to healthy ageing
- Grandparents are the foundation of a family, treat them with care and love

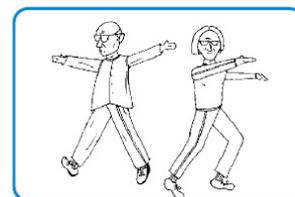


Community-based care for the elderly helps promote health, prevent disease and manage chronic illnesses



Reinvent Ageing

- No matter what your age, weight, health problems or abilities, do some form of physical activity every day



Ageing and Health



Fig. 1: Common geriatric syndromes (Picture courtesy of World Health Organisation).

2011. At this time, Brunei Darussalam still has a relatively young population with about 25% below 15 years old and older adults account for about 3.5% of the population. ¹ However, with the phenomenon of ageing population, 13% of Brunei’s population are expected to be elderly in 2025 and projected to increase to 17% in 2035. ²

Geriatric medicine or care of the elderly is a new medical subspecialty in Brunei Darussalam. Geriatric syndromes may be overlooked as we are still developing geriatric specialty care in our healthcare system. However, our primary care physicians are undergoing care for the elderly module as part of their vocational training. It is important to increase awareness among other healthcare professionals as they will be caring for this vulnerable ageing population.

In Brunei Darussalam, older adults are cared by their families or dedicated caregivers. Hence, older adults and their caregivers are encouraged to seek for early medical consultation at their local health centres. We hope with early intervention, we can achieve “**Good Health Adds Life to Years**”, the official slogan of World Health Day 2012.

REFERENCES

- 1:** Ministry of Health, Brunei Darussalam: Health Statistic 2011. Available from http://www.moh.gov.bn/satisticshealthguidelines/download/HIB_2011.pdf (Accessed 23rd March 2013).
- 2:** The Report: Brunei Darussalam 2009. Pg 37. Oxford Business Group.



a) Elderly precious human resources, and b) Promote Health throughout life