

GERIATRIC CONFERENCE REPORT
2 DAY REGIONAL LEVEL CONFERENCE ON ELDERLY ISSUES
PSYCHOSOCIAL PROBLEMS AND MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES IN OLD AGE

Organized By

National Institute of Social Defence
Ministry of Social Justice of Empowerment, Govt. Of India

in collaboration with

Regional Resource & Training Centre (Age Care)

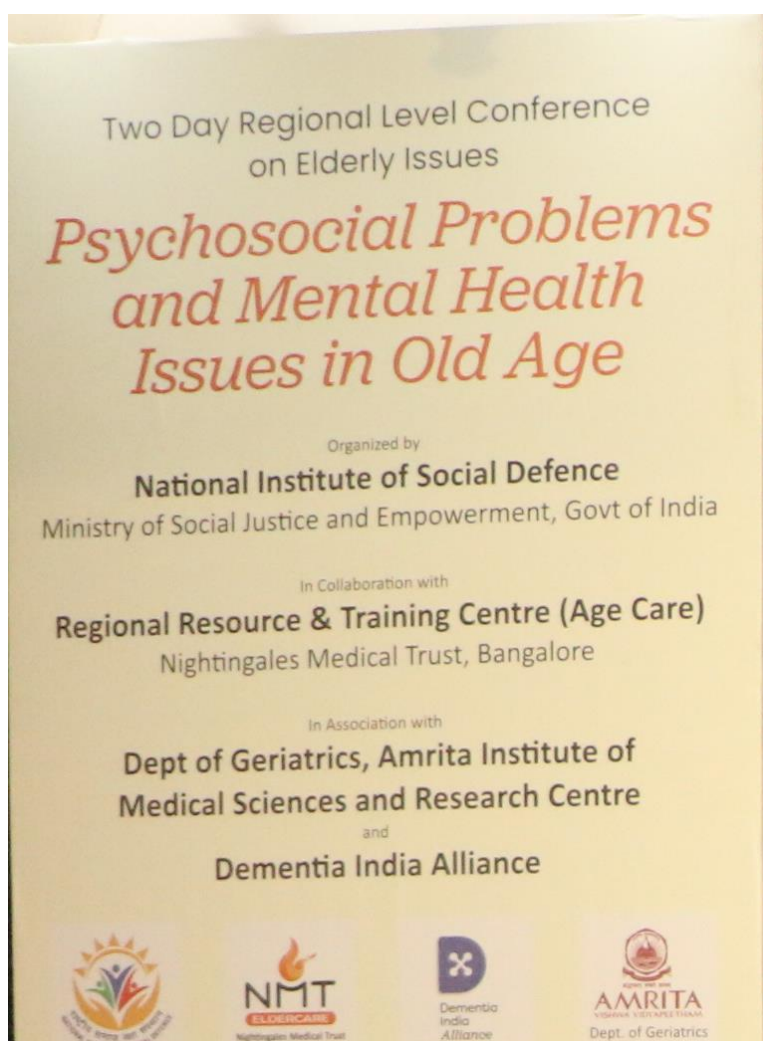
Nightingale Medical Trust, Bangalore

in Association with

Dept. of Geriatric, Amrita Institute of Medical Science and Research Centre

and

Dementia India Alliance.



Venue: Amriteshwari Hall, AIMS kochi

Dates: 26th and 27th March 2024

DAY-1 (26/3/2024)

Registration from 8:30am – 9:30am



Welcome speech and delegates were introduced to the 2 day Regional level conference on Elderly Issues “Psychosocial problems and mental health issues in old age”. Dr. Priya Vijayakumar Professor and HOD Dept. of Geriatrics Aims, Kochi



Speaker 1

Dr. Arun David Senior resident Doctor from Dept. of Geriatrics AIMS, Kochi, addressed the crowd on demographic details of elderly in India as well as Kerala. He said currently Kerala or India a 'Land of elderly' as young adults are migrating to greener pastures. He also mentioned the need of who introduced 10 year healthy ageing. Additionally he spoke on demographic issues from, **India Ageing 2023 report**, which was inclusive of elderly population in various states, multimorbidity, elderly abuse, senior citizen murder and neglect



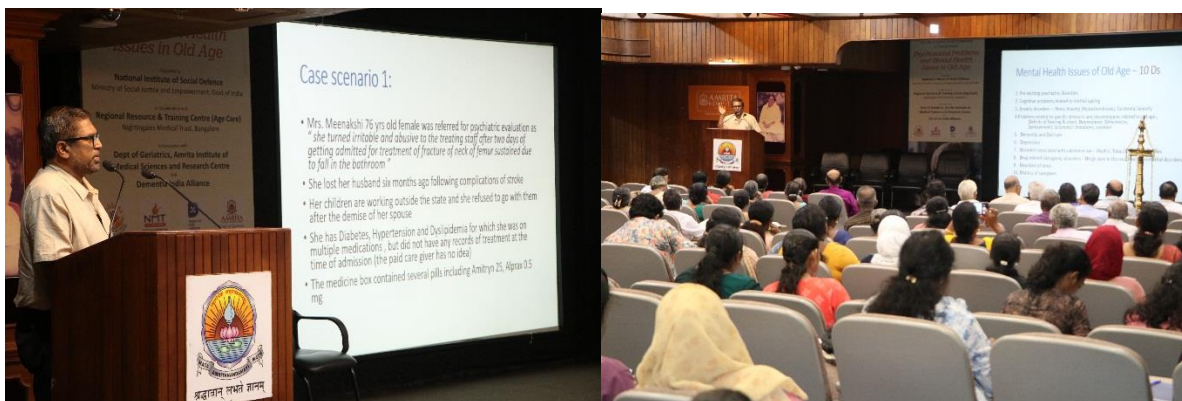
Speaker 2

Ms. Ranjana CA, Asst Professor Dept. of Clinical Psychologist and AIMS Kochi spoke on the topic Different psychosocial issues in old age. She discussed the multi-dimensional importance of psychosocial issues in ageing, psychological wellbeing, psychological satisfaction and factors leading to it, which include autonomy, personal growth, positive relationships, environmental mastery especially focusing on retired population, finding purpose in remaining life, how it can be dealt and how accepting oneself and adapting to changes is important. Then Psychosocial theories of ageing such as disengagement theory, activity theory, continuity theory which are aetiology of psychosocial problems in ageing. Then she focused on psychological concerns/issues such as life satisfaction, social support which starts with family and how it expands to outer circles and how its integrated with loneliness which leads to withdrawal from society, inability to adapt to technology, psychiatric problems, adjustment for wellbeing psychological wellbeing, cognitive changes and followed by psychosocial concerns in old age. The talk was concluded with cognitive changes seen in older people and various problems associated with it and importance of cognitive training and rehabilitation with the ample social and family support to adapt to changes more effectively.



Speaker 3

Dr. Varghese Punnoose HOD of Dept. of Psychiatry at Kottayam medical college spoke on Mental health issues in elderly. He started the session with case vignette and from the vignette he explained psychiatric issues seen in elderly. The areas he covered was 10Ds in Mental health issues in old age , behavioural and psychosocial symptoms of dementia and importance of caretaker training and emphasised on areas that increase psychological and environmental wellbeing in elderly including optimum sensory stimulation, ambulation, sunlight exposure ,discomforts – 4Bs such as bowel ,bladder ,beverages and bottom . He also pointed the suicidal rates in elderly which is generally unnoticed, he concluded the session with reminder that the problems caused in old age shouldn't be neglected but it should be formulated well for comprehensive management. He also made time to clear the doubts of audiences.



Speaker 4

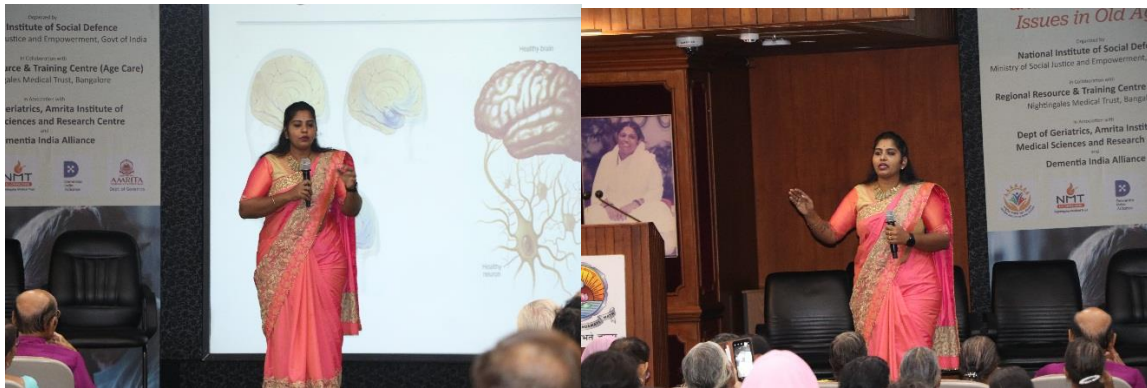
Dr. Kathleen Ann Mathew, Asst.Prof. Psychiatry AIMS, Kochi. She addressed on the epidemiological data of depression based on various studies conducted in India and Kerala. Speaker also enlightened the audience with criteria and duration of depression as per ICD- 10, associated disturbance such as pseudo dementia, aggression, gastro- intestinal issues. Factors leading to depression due to side effects of drugs, psychosocial issues such as empty nest syndrome, problems faced after retirement etc.

She narrated with examples which included different scenarios seen in old age. She concluded the talk with emphasis on the importance of diagnosing and treating depression at the right time in order to improve wellbeing.



Speaker 5 Ms. Sofiya Angelian Nightingales Medical Trust

The session started by Ms.Sofiya, Training Manager at Nightingale medical trust by illustrating an example for audience thereby introducing dementia and took forward the session by explaining the functioning of brain, differences between Normal Ageing and Dementia. The note she took forward was the warning signs - which is the first step to look into the service of memory screening. She also put forward regarding the types of dementia in which Alzheimer’s Dementia is most common type. She gave few points to remember such as: What affects the brain, Irreversible, No treatment only care, above age of 55-60years and it’s not part of ageing.



Speaker 6: Dr. Arathi KS consultant geriatric psychiatrist on Co existing mental and medical comorbidities. The session included an overview about geriatric population and how life expectancy leading to multi morbidity, the relationship between medical and mental health issues and their interdependency. The data showed higher prevalence of depression and anxiety in old age population. This was explained with quoting the example of diabetes and depression /anxiety, cardiovascular disease, and depression /anxiety. She also mentioned how symptoms of depression and other mental health disorders can be neglected or unnoticed which may be exhibited as somatic complaints which later turn to be crucial. Recognizing geriatric anxiety, she also talked on things to remember when dealing with a geriatric population such as sensitive to patients concern, give time to listen, avoid normalizing distress, seek help immediately, say no to stigma and psychiatric consultation, She concluded by saying when these symptoms are not subsided or causing further impairment to social, emotional and occupational areas then helps are necessary.



Panel Discussion

Panel discussion started by Dr, Bindu introducing the panel and giving the objective of the panel discussion. It was taken over by Ms. Ranjana briefing about the psychosocial issues in ageing how social stigma and ageism and stereotypes view of how aged people should behave affects mental health in old age. It was then passed on to Dr. Varghese, him briefing about loneliness in old age and importance of solitude. And answered to question by Dr. Bindu how personality traits affect in old age and flexibility can be helpful easily adapting to changes that occur in old age.

Dr. Katheline explained how Clinical depression can be differentiated from adjustment disorder based on the criteria and duration given.

Dr. Arathi focused on key points identifying mental health issues in geriatric population. Significant pervasive distress. Relevance of comprehensive geriatric care.

Ms. Sofiya briefed about the warning signs and symptoms of dementia that can help in early diagnosis.



After each panellist briefing about their distinctive topics the mike was handed over to audience.

Audience 1: Focused on social attitude towards elderly people and to that Dr. Bindu addressed by explaining the topic of ageism, which was followed by next delegate where he mentioned about his concerns in old age to which a general idea was given by Dr. Vargheese punnose focusing on insecurity and how it should be dealt with preparedness for old age and taking adequate routine medical check-up. He also gave idea about relief eating other signs that are shown in old age.

The last delegate gave the importance of following ones hobbies and being engaged activities helps in maintaining quality of life in old age and the session was further concluded on this note.



The panel discussion was followed by inaugural ceremony of 2-day regional level conference on Elderly Issues “Psychosocial problems and mental health issues in old age” Organized by National Institute of Social Defence, Ministry Of Social Justice Of Empowerment. Govt. Of India in collaboration with Regional Resource & Training Centre (Age Care), Nightingale Medical Trust ,Bangalore , in Association with Dept. of Geriatric, Amrita Institute of Medical Science and Research Centre and Dementia India Alliance.





LUNCH BREAK

Speaker 7

Dr. Sudhir Kumar MD, MRC Psychiatrist Honorary Consultant Psychiatrist. He spoke about dementia friendly communities is an international model which is trying to implement in Kerala. The DFCI is a community in which people know about dementia as a medical condition with several psychosocial challenges. Where early diagnosis is made and adequate support is given. In western DFCI it's a popularised idea but in DFCI it is aiming to provide basic resources and services available for patients and their family with dementia. He mentioned about 10 major steps that can be used in developing a dementia friendly environment. Thus includes building a Participatory approach , Awareness creation ,Building a database- Resources and IEC materials , healthy environment , creation of dementia cadres, training . The concerned topic was also published in Kerala journal of psychiatry. He then spoke about the dementia friendly community in Kerala time line. In 2021 Kochi was titled as first dementia friendly city in Kerala. He mentioned about programmes such as Ormathoni and Vayomithram projects He concluded the talk by mentioning the challenges in conduction of DFCI.



The final speaker of the day, Ms. Chippi started off her session on Healthy ageing and risk reduction with an interactive group activity. She engaged the audience by instructing them to clap using the corresponding number of fingers as was put up by her. She goes on to discuss about a new model of care for the elderly with its key tenets being better quality of life, more activities, cost reduction and more options/solutions. Ms. Chippi then laid out the precipitating factors of dementia such as obesity, arthritis, diabetes, smoking etc. and emphasized their preventive nature thus conveying the advantage of a preventive approach over curative.

Many other fun activities followed including a dance session, cognitive exercises and a story formation session where the audience constructed a story. She highlights the fact that 'We Are What We Repeatedly Do', thus encouraging the elderly to practice self-motivation. The speaker drives home her point through these simple demonstrations as they visibly improve the mood and energy among the audience.

The talk presented ASHA workers with the opportunity to pick up novel ideas like including memory games, singing and dancing into their care plan for the elderly. Next, she spoke in detail about online activities as part of the Nightingales Medical Trust Active Ageing programme and handy tips were discussed such as building strong social bonds, keeping mind and body active and staying positive. She concludes her engaging session with the quote “Adding life to years; a nod to NMT vision for elderly care”.



A brief Q and A session discussed subjects including the pervasive presence of societal stigma and lack of emphasis on preventive exercises by healthcare providers. The talk ended with a relaxing Rafi number by an active member of the geriatric club and loved singer, Mr. Laxman.



Day -2 (27/03/2024)

Speaker 1

Dr. Divya on abuse happening to geriatric population and how with the increase of geriatric population more concerns and issues with regard to mental health and social health increases. In Kerala about 15% complain of elderly abuse, some contributing factors being joint families, moving out of the countries for jobs by members of the family, not having enough time to spend with the elder members of the family. She also spoke about the common ways in which the elders are misused and mistreated such as abandoning, physical abuse, criticism. Such situations always lead to some mental health concerns in the elderly such as depression, memory issues, anxiety, and loneliness. She also emphasized on the signs of elderly abuse and how to recognise when an abuse may be happening some of the signs being- sleeplessness, loss of appetite, abuse marks on the person's body, a previously active and social person withdrawing completely from socializing, showing hesitation to talk about bruise marks that appear suddenly on their body.

She concluded the session by talking about how we can help geriatric population and stand against the abuse faced by them some methods that will be helpful mentioned were psych educating the caretakers, reaching out due help via a helpline number during crisis, making more policies for elderly population, making the geriatric population an out their rights and freedom, speaking out and learning to take action when facing abuse, etc. . The talk was concluded by sharing significant steps to lead a dignified geriatric life.



Speaker 2

Dr. S Shaji Consultant psychiatrist, Bethesda hospital, Perumbavoor on Management of late life depression. He started the talk by briefly introducing the late life depression by showing the statistical number based on recent studies indicating its prevalence. He discussed about the bio psychosocial factors of depression and how it leads to morbidity and mortality when untreated. He explained the basic 4 concepts of wellbeing in mental health such as adjustment, adaptation, resilience and coping. How self-help methods can be used to in smooth travel in continuum and from there the marker to which it has to be taken to a psychiatrist from there he explained various mood disorders seen. He educated about pharmacotherapy , psychotherapy and other counselling services, various treatment methods in pharmacotherapy such as various categories of psychiatric medicines , Electro convulsive therapy (ECT), cognitive techniques that leads to depressive thoughts, various therapeutic methods such as CBT , Interpersonal therapy . He explained about various psychosocial stages of development and focused on last stage integrity vs despair and the virtue from it wisdom and how it is important in old age.



Speaker 3

Dr. Anand Kumar, Neurologist and HOD. Dept. of Neurology AIMS kochi on management of dementia and prevention of memory loss. He started the talk by saying how recently memory loss have become a life style disease, he spoke about intuitive mind, and how intuitive development programmes are relevant in the current scenario. He said human thoughts eventually end in desire or fear and hence if one needs to manage any kind of impairment then one has to develop emotional resilience and this has to start from the conception of child in mother’s womb. Sir said small management steps for decelerating memory loss such as focusing on positive life style, sleep, diet, stress and its impact on memory. He said giving importance to caregivers of elderly and looking after their well fare is as important as taking care of the caregiver. After his speech he also answered the queries of audience.



The next part of the session was group discussion. The entire audience was divided into 4 groups and topic was given to each group and 20 minutes was given for discussion. After the given time one member from each group was assigned to present respective group topics.



Group 1 –Problems faced by elders

The presenter spoke about psychological, social, economic problems such as loneliness, physical ailments and disabilities, retirement lack of activity secondary to it, loss of authority, social withdrawal, and diseases like depression memory loss. He also spoke about social problems such as lack of social support and human resources. He concluded the presentation with a positive note and hope these concerns can be managed.



Group 2- Where to seek support for elders

The presenter was Rumana, social worker from Aluva welfare association. She spoke about various platforms that helps elderly in maintain wellbeing emotionally, mentally, and physically. Such as hospitals, palliative cares, meals programme, concept like Pakal Veedu, NGOs, Polices and schemes for financial support. Various communities and programme for engagement of elderly. She also mentioned the helpline number for elders.



Group 3- Services available to support elderly in Kerala and India

Bindu, PHC ALAPUZHA

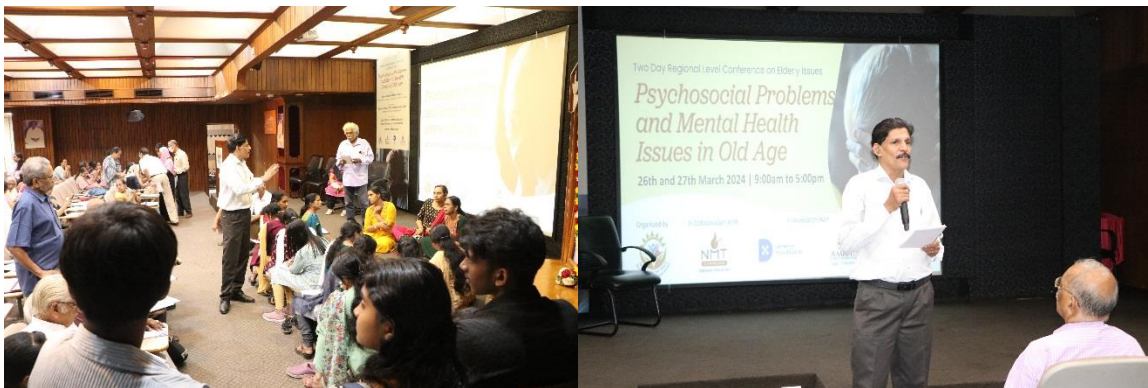
She spoke about the screening services in panchayat with regard to life style diseases, Vayomithram, “Shawas” for respiratory problems and “Ashwas” for mental health illnesses programs in PHC and CHC, formation of geriatric club for rejuvenation and regular health check-ups, “sukhino” for post-operative elderly people, DMHP for mental illness and treatment services, NPOP, Ormathoni, Mandhasam program for dental problems of elderly. Vayojana schemes such as pension and palliative care, vayoraksha, Annapoorna scheme.



Group 4- What do you think should be available in terms of services and other polices to help elderly?

Jose N George,

He spoke about how some schemes are in their implementing stage as well as how some schemes are yet to be implemented. He spoke about the need of a recreational spaces that help people to spend time in recreational activities, as well as for those elderly persons that wished to discover their talents and skills, implementing Vayomithra institutions to less accessible regions. He also mentioned about the need for special transportations for the geriatric population especially in public places. He concluded his discussions by speaking about the need for organizing one-day trips for the elder people of the area to help them stay active, give them opportunity for making connections with others of their age, as well



Dr Divya summed up about group discussion topics and how to deal with the problems faced by the old age society.

Tea Break

Speaker 4

Dr. Shoba Nair, HOD and Asst. Prof Dept. of Palliative care and medicine, AIMS, Kochi, on Palliative care, rehabilitation, legal and ethical issues. She enlightened the crowd about a much less discussed and avoided topic, i.e., death. She started off with the concept of Palliative care and the conditions that require Palliative care. She spoke about palliative medicine and how it's usually given for pain management such as paracetamol, diclofenac, morphine, ketamine, as well as about drug de-addiction. She familiarised us about the Kerala model of Palliative care. She next spoke about

resilience and how to build resilience through different ways such as making connections, avoid seeing crises as insurmountable problem, accepting that change is part of living, moving towards a specific goals, taking decisive actions, looking for opportunities for self-discovery, nurturing a positive view of self, keeps things in perspective etc. She also spoke about legal aspects of those in palliative care and how the family plays an important role during this time.



LUNCH BREAK

Speaker 5

Mr. Praveen started off the afternoon session post lunch with the topic home care for elderly in Kerala. He duly explained about what exactly home care and its associated terms like hospice care meant and who all come under the criteria for home care. He talked about his experience in working in this field since past many years, running Guardian Angel's Home Care situated in Palarivattom. He elaborated in detail about how important is home care can be to the geriatric population.

Speaker 6

Ms. Sofiya had the next session describing about NMT or Nightingale medical trust and their age care projects and their subdivisions. She then described about different options for care specifically for dementia. Telemedicine dementia care was one of the unique features. Importance of awareness and advocacy for the disease which have been practiced meticulously so far was shown.



VALEDICTORY



Feedback Session

