



ROLE OF NURSES IN ELDERLY CARE AND AGE-RELATED HEALTH ISSUES

Life expectancy on the rise

It is indeed good news that life expectancy has increased globally over the ages. Along with this, the need for quality elderly care has gone up substantially. According to the World Health Organisation, the proportion of older adults is growing rapidly. This is turn is leading to a higher prevalence of age-related health conditions. Nurses play a central role in addressing these challenges, providing holistic, compassionate and patient-centred care.

Nurses in elderly care

One of the primary responsibilities of nurses in elderly care is the management of chronic diseases such as hypertension, diabetes, arthritis and cardiovascular disorders. Older adults often suffer from multiple health conditions simultaneously, requiring careful monitoring and medication management. Nurses ensure adherence to treatment plans, assess symptoms regularly and help prevent complications through early intervention.

The second area where nurses make a difference is in enhancing independence and functional ability. Ageing often leads to reduced mobility, sensory impairments and cognitive decline. Nurses assist elderly patients with activities of daily living such as bathing, dressing and feeding while encouraging them to remain as independent as possible. They also educate patients and caregivers about fall prevention, mobility aids and home safety modifications.

Mental health care is also key in elderly populations. Conditions like depression, anxiety and dementia are often underdiagnosed. Nurses can help here as they are usually the first to notice behavioural changes, memory loss or emotional distress. Through regular interaction, they provide emotional support, facilitate early diagnosis and coordinate care with mental health professionals.



Another critical domain where nurses prove invaluable is preventive care. Nurses educate elderly individuals about healthy lifestyle choices, including balanced nutrition, regular physical activity and adherence to vaccination schedules. They also conduct routine screenings for vision, hearing and cancer.

Communication also lies in the nurse's ambit as they act as a bridge between patients, families and healthcare providers, ensuring that the elderly patient's needs, preferences and dignity are respected. In many cases, nurses push for better care plans, palliative care options and end-of-life decisions that align with the patient's wishes.

Finally, nurses contribute significantly to caregiver support and education. Family members often struggle with the physical and emotional demands of caring for elderly loved ones. Nurses provide guidance, training, and reassurance, helping caregivers cope effectively.

Truly, nurses are indispensable in elderly care, their role extending beyond clinical duties to include emotional support, education and preventive care.