

Geriatric Care Update 2024

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Singapore is undergoing a demographic shift, which has immense implications on the health and care needs of the country. In 2019, 14.4 percent of the population were aged 65 and older; however, this is expected to increase to 25 percent by 2030.¹ Population ageing is a key issue and an integrated, multifaceted, and holistic approach has to be taken to address the varying needs of older adults across multiple domains as they age.

As one ages, there is an accumulation of molecular and cellular damage over time at the biological level.² This medically intractable change leads to a progressive decrease in mental and physical capacity and ultimately an increased risk of disease. With the inevitability of age, one is more likely to experience several disease conditions at the same time.

This issue of the *Singapore Family Physician* highlights the unique features of common health conditions in the elderly such as dementia, Parkinson's, stroke, insomnia, and frailty, and what physicians can do to improve the adaptation, recovery, and psychosocial growth of older adults experiencing such conditions.

In Unit 1, Dr Vanessa Mok writes about the assessment and management of behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia (BPSD). She discusses various interventions that can be employed to manage BPSD and emphasises the need to tailor interventions to the individual while incorporating and considering the caregivers.

In Unit 2, A/Prof Tan Tze Lee gives a timely update about mental capacity assessment, Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA), and court-appointed deputy application. He also highlights important ethical issues related to the Mental Capacity Act.

In Unit 3, Drs Matthew Ng and Ng Beng Yeong write about the assessment and management of insomnia. They provide a detailed review of interventions that can be used to treat insomnia.

In Unit 4, Drs Joanne Kua and Daphne Yang give a comprehensive review about sarcopenia and frailty, which are considered the modern geriatric giants of today.

In Unit 5, Dr Shermyn Neo and Professor Tan Eng King discuss the disease presentation, trajectory, and management of Parkinson's disease in the elderly.

In Unit 6, Dr Lui Siew Kwaon provides an overview of the role for stroke rehabilitation and discusses relevant post-stroke complications that family physicians may come across when caring for stroke survivors.

Also in this issue, A/Prof Goh Lee Gan has selected ten current readings on topics related to Geriatric Care in 2024. These readings include articles about stroke rehabilitation, mental capacity, and frailty.

REFERENCES

1. Department of Statistics Singapore. <https://www.singstat.gov.sg/find-data/search-by-theme/population/elderly-youth-and-gender-profile/latest-data>.
2. Partridge L. The new biology of ageing. *Philos Trans R Soc Lond B Biol Sci*. 2010 Jan 12;365(1537):147-54. doi: 10.1098/rstb.2009.0222. PMID: 20008392; PMCID: PMC2842712.