

Geriatric Physiotherapy for Active Ageing

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Physiotherapy care is fundamental to ageing care. Geriatric Physiotherapy started, in HelpAge India as a pilot project in the Old Age Homes of Delhi & NCR in May 2008. We surveyed around 35 Old Age Homes and analyzed the need for Quality Physiotherapy Treatment for Elderly. Thereafter, we started our Physiotherapy services to the Old Age Home. We received tremendous response and feedback from the Elder Patients who underwent our Physiotherapy Treatments. This led us to start Physiotherapy Clinics in other parts of India. So gradually we started AgeCare Services Centre (ASCENT) in 21 locations across the country. Recently, the idea of Fitness & Wellness was developed which aimed at Independent & Active Ageing.

Physiotherapy care is fundamental to Ageing. The natural process of Ageing in all individuals results in a host of degenerative mental and physical problems. The physiological changes result in reduction of muscle power and tone, reduced range of motion and bone density. Symptoms include general body weakness, Fatigue, faulty body posture, decrease in cardio pulmonary endurance (loss of stamina) and reduced exercise tolerance. For an individual to lead an independent life with dignity, it is important to carry out activities of daily living (ADL) unassisted.

The aim of Geriatric Physiotherapy Programme is to provide preventive health care and to maintain the fitness level in a healthy individual, treating diseased or disabled individuals (e.g. paralytic patients) and finally, treating conditions that cause disability (e.g. musculoskeletal diseases like back pain, arthritis, etc.). Geriatric Physiotherapy has been pioneered in India primarily to facilitate Elder-Mobility and enhance independent ADL activities.

HelpAge India has established and currently operates 86 Physiotherapy clinics (Fitness & Wellness Centers) which have administered 98196 treatments and have registered 10,249 elderly patients through stationary clinics in 30 cities till date. We also have mobile services to remote communities, residents of old age homes and elders living at home which have registered 875 Elderly Patients and have done 6359 treatment sessions till date. Survey of assistive devices and products in the market for use by the Elderly to intensify independent living and occupational needs is proposed. Analysis of clinical data for research is ongoing viz. disability patterns, prevalence & type of musculoskeletal disorders, etc.