Nurses Content
Downloaded from nursescontent.com

Geriatric and Rehabilitation Health Services

Community Health Nursing

Health needs of older adults, common geriatric problems, home-based care, rehabilitation, disability prevention, palliative care, social support and nursing responsibilities.

For educational purposes only.

CHAPTER 17 / COMMUNITY HEALTH NURSING 17. Geriatric and Rehabilitation Health Services

1. Introduction and definitions

Geriatric healthcare addresses the health needs of older adults, commonly defined in Indian programmes as people aged 60 years and above. Rehabilitation is a process of optimizing functioning and reducing disability through coordinated interventions. Healthy ageing emphasizes functional ability, participation, dignity and supportive environments, not simply freedom from disease.

2. Common health needs and problems

Area	Common problems	Nursing approach
Physical	Arthritis, sensory changes, chronic diseases	Assess function, support treatment and pain relief
Mobility	Falls, frailty, reduced strength	Safe exercises, aids, home safety assessment
Nutrition	Poor appetite, swallowing problems, food insecurity	Assess intake, weight and swallowing; refer
Cognition	Dementia, delirium	Assess baseline; urgent referral for acute confusion
Psychosocial	Loneliness, bereavement, depression	Social support and mental health assessment
Medication	Polypharmacy, adverse effects	Reconcile medicines and monitor response

3. Comprehensive geriatric assessment

Assess medical history, cognition, mood, nutrition, mobility and fall risk, continence, sensory function, medication use, activities of daily living (ADL), instrumental ADL, caregiver support and home environment. ADL include bathing, dressing, feeding and toileting; IADL include shopping, managing medicines, finances, cooking and transport. Katz ADL and Lawton IADL are common assessment frameworks. Screening results require clinical context.

4. Home-based geriatric care

Maintain medication lists and appointment plans; assess gait, lighting, loose rugs, stairs and bathroom safety; encourage strength and balance activity appropriate to ability; ensure access to hearing/vision aids; support oral care, hydration and nutrition. Assess caregiver burden and possible neglect or abuse. Respect the adult's

Nurses Content
Downloaded from nursescontent.com

autonomy and avoid assuming that age indicates incapacity.

5. Rehabilitation and disability prevention

Type	Example
Physical	Physiotherapy, gait training, joint mobility
Occupational	Adapted daily activities and assistive devices
Speech/swallowing	Communication and dysphagia rehabilitation
Psychological	Adjustment support and coping
Social/vocational	Participation, accessibility and employment support

Goals should be functional, measurable and agreed with the patient. Prevention includes prompt treatment of reversible limitations, fall prevention, skin care, safe mobilization and management of chronic disease. Community-based rehabilitation connects individuals with local resources and promotes inclusion.

6. Palliative care

Palliative care aims to relieve suffering and improve quality of life in serious illness; it may be provided alongside disease-directed treatment. Assess pain, breathlessness, emotional and spiritual concerns, patient goals and family needs. Support prescribed symptom control, privacy, advance care discussions and referral to specialist services. Bereavement support extends to the family as appropriate.

7. Health programmes and nursing responsibilities

NPHCE (National Programme for Health Care of the Elderly) supports geriatric services across levels of care. Nurses assess function, educate families, arrange referrals, support rehabilitation, identify elder abuse, provide home follow-up and coordinate social welfare resources. Sudden weakness, chest pain, breathlessness, falls with head injury or acute confusion requires urgent evaluation.

8. Functional assessment and healthy ageing

Geriatric assessment evaluates function, not merely disease count. Activities of daily living (ADLs) include basic self-care such as bathing, dressing, toileting and feeding. Instrumental ADLs include activities such as shopping, transport, managing medicines and finances. Assess the person's own goals, accessibility and available support.

Domain	Nursing assessment
Mobility	Gait, falls, strength, assistive devices and hazards.
Cognition	Baseline status, memory concerns and sudden changes.
Medication	Reconciliation, adverse effects, adherence and access.
Nutrition	Intake, swallowing, weight changes and hydration.
Psychosocial	Loneliness, depression, caregiver support and possible abuse.

Home environment	Lighting, obstacles, handrails, accessible toilet and emergency contacts.

9. Rehabilitation and palliative care example

An older adult recovering from stroke has difficulty bathing and dressing. Work with the rehabilitation team on individualized goals, safe transfers and caregiver training. Arrange appropriate equipment and follow-up; avoid doing all tasks for the person if supported independence is safe. If the person also has serious illness, palliative care can address symptoms and quality of life alongside rehabilitative or disease-directed care.

Clinical warning signs

Sudden confusion, new weakness, falls with head injury, acute breathlessness and marked functional decline require timely assessment. Do not assume these are normal consequences of ageing.

10. Important Examination Questions

Long Answer Questions

1. 1. Explain health problems of older adults, comprehensive assessment and rehabilitation nursing.
2. 2. Explain a community-based comprehensive geriatric assessment.
3. 3. Discuss rehabilitation and palliative nursing for a dependent older adult.

Short Answer Questions

1. 1. ADL vs IADL

NURSE'S CONTENT / COMMUNITY HEALTH NURSING 53

B.SC. NURSING / STUDY NOTES

1. 2. fall prevention
2. 3. palliative care
3. 4. NPHCE
4. 5. ADL and IADL.
5. 6. Fall prevention.
6. 7. Caregiver support.
7. 8. Home-based palliative care.

Very Short Answer Questions (with answers)

1. 1. Indian programme elderly age? 60 years and above.
2. 2. Acute fluctuating inattention? Delirium.
3. 3. Care to relieve serious-illness suffering? Palliative care.
4. 4. Is dementia an inevitable part of ageing? - No.
5. 5. What is the primary goal of rehabilitation? - Optimal function and participation.

Nurses Content
Downloaded from nursescontent.com

11. Quick Revision

- Assess functional ability and preferences.
- Sudden cognitive decline is not normal ageing.
- Promote safe independence and accessibility.
- Support caregivers without compromising patient autonomy.

Conclusion

Geriatric nursing promotes dignity and function through prevention, rehabilitation and person-centred support.

NURSE'S CONTENT / COMMUNITY HEALTH NURSING 54

B.SC. NURSING / STUDY NOTES

Practice questions

Choose one best answer. The answer key and explanations follow the questions.

1. Which activity is an instrumental activity of daily living rather than a basic ADL?

A. Managing medicines
B. Bathing
C. Dressing
D. Feeding

2. An older adult develops acute confusion compared with baseline. What is the appropriate nursing response?

A. Treat it as proof of permanent dementia
B. Arrange urgent clinical referral
C. Assume it is normal ageing
D. Wait until the annual review

3. Which goal best reflects rehabilitation care?

A. Choose goals without the patient's input
B. Measure success only by the number of visits
C. Improve a patient-agreed daily function using measurable targets
D. Eliminate all chronic diagnoses before discharge

Nurses Content
Downloaded from nursescontent.com

Answer key and explanations

1. A - Managing medicines

Managing medicines is an IADL; bathing, dressing and feeding are basic ADLs.

2. B - Arrange urgent clinical referral

Acute confusion warrants urgent referral rather than attribution to ageing.

3. C - Improve a patient-agreed daily function using measurable targets

Rehabilitation goals should be functional, measurable and agreed with the patient.

Source and attribution

Online chapter: https://nursescontent.com/learn/community-health-nursing/geriatric-and-rehabilitation-health-services/

Downloaded from Nurses Content. Branding identifies the delivery website. Original author credits, third-party licences and applicable rights remain unchanged.