

Task 2

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Introduction

The elderly population is growing quickly and the world population is undergoing a big transition. In the UK, where there are more people over 65 than ever before, this tendency is particularly obvious. While the rise in the aged population is a good thing, it also raises new questions and exacerbates problems already faced by the elderly. The aging population puts further strain on the already overburdened health and social care (H+SC) sector, a situation that has been made worse by the consequences of the current epidemic (Curtis, 2013). With an emphasis on tackling the problem of dementia, this paper seeks to critically review the identification, assessment, and description of the health and social care needs of an aged person. It will also go over the bigger picture of aging, including what is meant by "old age" and how the aging population affects the availability of health and social services.

Concept of old age

The idea of "old age" has several facets and includes a variety of biological, sociological, and cultural elements. The physiological and functional changes brought on by aging are the primary emphasis of a biological perspective, but cultural definitions also take stereotypes, retirement age, and other factors into account. Old age is typically connected to the later stages of the human lifetime from a biological standpoint. It is characterized by a steady deterioration in mental and physical capacities, including weakened muscles, impaired sensory abilities, and a higher risk of developing chronic illnesses. Genetic, lifestyle, and environmental variables all have an impact on biological aging. The onset and development of age-related changes can, however, differ greatly between people, it is crucial to highlight (Makita, et al., 2021). Retirement age is frequently included as a fundamental criterion in societal definitions of old age. Retirement age acts as a threshold for when people leave the workforce and enter a stage of life that is frequently characterized by leisure, fewer obligations, and more free time. The diverse social, economic, and political circumstances in which older people live are reflected in the different retirement ages among nations and cultures. Social norms and preconceptions also influence how we perceive aging. Older people are frequently expected to fulfill duties and responsibilities that are peculiar to their age, such as becoming grandparents or imparting knowledge and wisdom to younger generations. The prospects and

autonomy of older people are, however, sometimes restricted by ageism, discrimination, and marginalization brought on by these expectations (McPhee, et al., 2016).

It is essential to comprehend the many meanings of old age in order to assess the special requirements and difficulties older people encounter. Policymakers, healthcare providers, and society at large may create a more thorough strategy to address ³¹the health and social care requirements of older people ¹⁹by taking into account both the biological and sociocultural components of aging. ²³It is critical to understand that older adults are a diverse group with a range of skills, requirements, and goals. Some older people may have age-related health problems and functional decline, whilst others may maintain high physical and cognitive capacities long into old age. As a result, it's critical to take a personalized strategy that considers the special ²³needs and preferences of each older person. The notion of old age is fluid and subject to change throughout time. The way that old age is viewed and experienced can be affected by developments in healthcare, technology, and society attitudes regarding aging. In order to keep their freedom, pursue their personal ambitions, and give back to their communities as they age, people may reframe their expectations and aspirations for later life (Sjölund, et al., 2010).

The ageing population

A key demographic shift that is occurring globally is the aging of the population, which has a number of root reasons. The incredible improvement in medical science is one important element. Significant advances in illness prevention, diagnosis, and treatment have been made over time, improving healthcare outcomes and lengthening life expectancy. Vaccines, antibiotics, and improvements in surgical methods are just a few examples of the medical innovations that have helped people live longer by lowering mortality rates and improving general health. The aging population has been significantly influenced by both medical progress and better living situations. Social developments including increased access to clean water, better sanitation, and better nutrition have helped people live longer and in better health. Technology and infrastructure improvements have increased the accessibility and affordability of healthcare services, enabling people to live better lives (Rechel, et al., 2013). Declining birth rates are an important role in the aging of the population. Due to social, economic, and cultural developments, fertility rates have fallen in many nations. People have chosen to have

fewer children or put off beginning families as a result of factors like expanding educational and employment possibilities for women, urbanization, and growing childcare costs. As a result, the demographics of the population have changed, with a greater number of senior people than younger generations (Stephoe, et al., 2015).

The effects of the aging population are extensive, and they present difficulties for the health and social care systems. There is a rising need for healthcare services, long-term care, and social support networks as the percentage of elderly people rises. To fulfill the unique requirements of older patients, the healthcare staff must adapt, providing specialist geriatric care, chronic illness management, and palliative care (Beard, et al., 2016). Social repercussions of the aging population are also present. It draws attention to the importance of developing intergenerational interactions, fighting ageism, and social inclusion. The contributions and experiences of older people must be valued by communities and society as a whole. Intergenerational activities, community-based support programs, and age-friendly initiatives can promote social interaction, lessen loneliness, and improve the wellbeing of senior citizens (Mooney, et al., 2021).

Issues Experienced by Older People, with a Focus on Dementia.

Dementia is a severe problem that affects the wellbeing of older people and is one of many problems they face. A neurological condition called dementia is characterized by a steady deterioration in cognitive function, which impairs memory, thinking, behavior, and the capacity to carry out daily tasks. It presents enormous difficulties not only for those who have dementia but also for those who care for them and their families (Abbott, 2011). The effects of dementia on people are severe. Making judgments, communicating clearly, and doing routine chores can all be hampered by memory loss and cognitive impairment. People may notice personality changes, mood swings, and agitation as the illness worsens. For people with dementia, losing their autonomy and needing help with basic everyday tasks can be upsetting and undermine their sense of self and autonomy (Moriarty, and Webb, 2000). Dementia also has a negative impact on a person's emotional and psychological health. As they try to retain their cognitive abilities and adjust to the changes in their lives, they could feel irritated, confused, and alone. Dementia patients frequently experience anxiety and depression, which worsens their condition overall (Caddell, and Clare, 2010). Families and carers of people with dementia must also

overcome numerous obstacles. They frequently take on the demanding—both physically and emotionally—responsibilities of giving care and support. The complexity of caregiving activities rises over time due to dementia's progressing nature. Family members might need to make changes to their own lives, such as juggling employment, personal obligations, and caregiving responsibilities, which could result in more stress and a lower quality of life (Merrilees, 2016).

The difficulties that those with dementia confront have been made even worse by the COVID-19 pandemic. Lockdowns, ³⁹ social isolation, and restricted ²⁶ access to healthcare services are just a few of the required controls to stop the virus's spread that have disproportionately harmed older people, especially those with dementia. Routine disruption, fewer social connections, and isolation have all contributed to an increase in perplexity, anxiety, and behavioral changes in dementia patients. ²⁶ Families and caregivers are under more stress as a result of the closure of daycare facilities and respite services because they frequently depend on these facilities for support and respite (Canevelli, et al., 2020). A thorough and holistic strategy is needed to address the problems older individuals with dementia face. In order to counteract ageism and lessen stigma, it is essential to increase awareness about dementia in society and to promote knowledge of the disease. Education campaigns can raise public knowledge of dementia, encourage early detection, and foster sympathy and support for dementia patients (Lin and Lewis, 2015).

Having access to top-notch healthcare services is essential. Early detection, in-depth assessment, and specialised dementia care are all necessary. Collaboration between primary care physicians, specialists, ³³ and community organisations is essential to providing a continuum of treatment and support for people with dementia and their families. Designing spaces that are accommodating to the requirements of people with dementia is also essential. According to Robinson et al. (2015), this entails altering the physical layout of a space to increase safety and accessibility, providing the appropriate signage and indicators, and promoting social inclusion and substantial community involvement. It is essential to support families and carers. The stress of caregiving can be reduced, and caregivers' wellbeing can be improved, with the help of respite services,

counseling, and training programs. It is critical to acknowledge and address the support networks and services that families and carers need for their mental health (World Health Organization, 2018).

⁴ **Current Health and Social Care Provision: Sufficiency and Impacts of Aging Population**

¹⁸
The existing delivery of health and social care services for the elderly is beset by a number of difficulties, and the burden on these systems is only growing as the population ages. The specifics of health and social care delivery vary among areas and nations, but a common feature is that many systems are already under stress as a result of the increase in demand. To guarantee that current care models are adequate and effective in serving the different requirements of the aging population, it is critical to examine and adjust them (Leslie, and Hankey, 2015). Adopting a person-centered care philosophy is one of the most important factors in providing enough support for effective aging. This strategy acknowledges that older people are different individuals with unique needs, interests, and ambitions. In person-centered care, older people are actively involved in the planning ²⁹ and decision-making processes for their care, their values and preferences are taken into account, and interventions are tailored to their unique needs. Person-centered care can improve the general well-being and contentment of older people by valuing their autonomy and encouraging their active involvement in their own care (World Health Organization, 2015). Community-based programs are essential for helping older people age successfully. These services cover a wide spectrum of assistance, including social activities, daycare facilities, transportation, and home care. Older people can keep their freedom, stay connected to their social networks, and continue engaging in worthwhile activities by offering support and resources within the community. By facilitating social connections and encouraging a sense of belonging, community-based services can also help prevent social isolation, a problem that older people frequently face (Farrance, et al., 2016).

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For older people's complex and linked needs to be met, integrated care approaches are crucial. A more holistic approach that takes into account the interaction of physical, mental, and social variables is made possible by the integration of health and social care services. Coordinating care across various healthcare providers, combining general and

specialist care, and fostering smooth transitions between various care venues can all play a part in this. In order to improve older people's health outcomes and quality of life, integrated care models work to better coordinate care, increase professional communication, and guarantee continuity of care (Ciabattini, et al., 2018). The aging population has numerous effects on the delivery of social and medical care. The growth in the elderly population creates issues with resource allocation, personnel capacity, and service provision. These issues must be addressed by the health and social care systems if older people are to receive the aid and assistance they require. Investing in infrastructure and technology to assist the delivery of care, as well as mitigating the financial effects of an aging population, are some of the steps that fall under this category (Dickens, et al., 2011). Additionally, the aging population creates chances for innovation and advancement in the delivery of social and health care. Technology advancements can significantly contribute to the availability of telehealth, virtual care, and remote monitoring, which can improve older people's access to healthcare services and assistance. Additionally, specialized interventions and policies that meet the particular needs and difficulties of older people can be developed using research and evidence-based methods (Omachonu, and Einspruch, 2010).

Government and Health Service Response: Policy, Practice, and Interventions

The issues presented by the aging population have been recognized by governments and health institutions around the world. To support senior citizens and meet their specific requirements, numerous policies, procedures, and interventions have been put into place. This includes attempts to enhance awareness and early dementia diagnosis, the creation of national dementia plans, the encouragement of intergenerational cooperation, and the eradication of ageism. Government approaches to dementia have been anchored by national dementia policies. These tactics seek to raise the standard of care and assistance provided to people with dementia and their families. They set out the top priorities in research, early detection, prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and support. These strategies aid in ensuring a thorough and integrated approach to dementia care by integrating efforts across many sectors, including health, social care, and research (Tanaka, 2013). Government and health care activities are heavily focused on raising awareness of and promoting early dementia diagnosis. Public awareness initiatives seek

to dispel stigma, inform the public about dementia's symptoms and indicators, and encourage prompt help-seeking. Additionally, training and direction are provided to healthcare personnel to improve their capacity for early dementia recognition and diagnosis. The timely deployment of suitable interventions and support is made possible by early diagnosis, and this can considerably enhance the results for dementia patients (Mok, et al. 2020).

Another essential component of government and health service actions is access to appropriate care and support services. The accessibility and availability of dementia-specific services, such as memory clinics, specialized dementia care facilities, respite care, and home-based support, are being improved. Community-based programs, such as day centers and support groups, are also given priority in order to encourage social interaction, lessen isolation, and give dementia sufferers and their caregivers useful support. Government and health service solutions to the aging population must address ageism and foster intergenerational solidarity. Ageism is the term for the prejudice, discrimination, and stereotyping that people suffer based on their age. Governments and healthcare providers strive to build age-friendly societies that honor the contributions and wisdom of the elderly. This involves advocating for active aging, intergenerational initiatives, and laws that support older people's social involvement and participation (Kelley, et al., 2015). Effective policy implementation requires cooperation between the health and social care sectors as well as community involvement. To ensure coordination and integration of services, governments form partnerships with healthcare providers, social care providers, and neighborhood associations. In order to improve communication, streamline care pathways, and offer seamless transitions between various care locations, multidisciplinary teams and care coordination models are formed. To ensure that policies and services are responsive to the needs and preferences of older people and their communities, community involvement is promoted through consultation, engagement, and participatory techniques (Hampel, et al., 2022). There is still potential for improvement, despite the fact that numerous governments and health systems have put policies and measures in place to deal with the problems associated with an aging population. To ensure that policies are successful and responsive to shifting demands, they must be continuously evaluated and modified. In order to support the execution of

policies and the provision of high-quality services, adequate finance and resource allocation are necessary. Collaboration amongst stakeholders is essential for continual discussion, knowledge exchange, and innovation in meeting the changing requirements of the aging population, including older people, their families, healthcare professionals, policymakers, and researchers (Powell, 2018).

Relevant Aging Theories

Exploring multiple theories helps us understand how people experience and negotiate aging. Psychosocial, bio-psycho-social, and person-centered views illuminate aging. These beliefs inform successful aging therapies and support systems. Erik Erikson's psychosocial theory emphasizes lifelong socialization and personal growth. This idea states that people go through psychosocial stages with distinct developmental tasks. In older life, one must find integrity and acceptance. This endeavor requires looking back, being positive, and making friends. Social interaction promotes well-being and good aging, according to this notion (Orenstein, and Lewis, 2022). The bio-psycho-social paradigm examines how biological, psychological, and social variables influence aging. This paradigm acknowledges that biological, psychological, and social variables affect aging. Age-related biological aspects include organ decline and illness susceptibility. Cognitive, emotional, and mental health are psychological aspects. Social aspects include social networks, partnerships, and aging attitudes. The bio-psycho-social paradigm emphasizes addressing these linked aspects to promote healthy and effective aging (Davies, and Roache, 2017). Person-centered interventions and support systems cater to older people's needs, preferences, and strengths. This approach emphasizes older people's distinct histories, experiences, and abilities. It promotes autonomy and dignity by involving older people in care decisions. Person-centered care improves older people's well-being and satisfaction by considering their values, ambitions, and personal circumstances. This approach recognizes that successful aging requires control, purpose, and fulfillment (Fazio, et al., 2018).

Conclusion

The growing elderly population brings opportunities and problems for the social and health care systems. A multifaceted strategy incorporating philosophy, policy, and practice is needed to address ¹⁸the health and social care requirements of older people,

particularly with relation to dementia. To ensure healthy aging, it is crucial to have adequate support, interventions, and policies that stress person-centered care, inclusive communities, and holistic well-being. Societies can work to create a supportive and dignified environment for their aging populations by critically assessing the current offering and adapting it to changing requirements.

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