Promoting Active Aging In Older Adults

Miranda Hanchett
Ghent, Belgium
OBJECTIVES

- Learn the effects of providing activities that encourages independence in older adults
- Encourage active aging and health promotion
- Increase the quality of life of local residents in all aspects of life
- Provide a range of services in order to promote active aging
- Provide financial means and transportation to promote the utilization of these services
BACKGROUND

• Belgium:
  • Population: 11,276,910
    • Population ages 65 and above: 18% (~2,029,844)\(^1\)
  • A Western European liberal democracy
  • A mixed economic system: private-enterprise system combined with centralized economic planning and government regulation\(^2\)
  • Focus on quality of life
BACKGROUND

• Attended the International Program on Palliative and End-of-Life Care (IPPE) Event at Cohere Academy at Arteveldgehogeschool in Ghent, Belgium
  • Program also focused on quality of life, complementary therapies, and resources in the community that promote an active life
• Various site visits
  • One site included a community health center that focused on the older population and improving their quality of life
Specific Learning Objective

• Primary Issue: Enhance quality of life for older adults
  • “Old age is not synonymous with disease, however, advancing age can cause reduced functional capacity, causing the elderly lose their autonomy and independence, thus compromising their quality of life.”

• How can we promote active aging among older adults in order to increase their quality of life?
INTERVENTIONS

• Individual:
  • Individual commitment to active aging
  • Family commitment for aging family members
  • In-patient and home care for older adults
  • Utilization of complementary therapies
    • Massage, art/music therapy
INTerventions

• Community:
  • Community Centers
    • Ten Hove, in Belgium, is a community center that provides a range of activities to the community in order to promote activity and a higher quality of life

• System:
  • Government funding for programs that promote active aging
  • Public transit or easily accessible transportation to programs
Residents can choose from options that will help one stay fit and healthy to options that develop creativity and encourages interaction

- Aqua gym, Zumba, yoga, qi gong, dance
- Courses that promote lifelong learning: self-paced
- Creative activities
- Surplus activities: parlor games, shopping trips
- Provides transportation

For the residents of Bruges Gate, Princes, Begijnhofdries, Papegaaistraat, and Malem Ekkergem with special attention to the seniors and the most vulnerable of them
Outside area between buildings

Belly dancing: One of several activities offered at Ten Hove

Art and crafts room

Painting room with natural sunlight shining through large windows
CONCLUSION

• With a loss of independence comes a diminished quality of life.⁴
• “Innovative population-level efforts are required to address physical inactivity, prevent loss of muscle strength, and maintain balance in older adults.”⁵
• In order to improve quality of life, we must promote activity and independence in the older population
  • Includes advocating for policies that would allow funding for these types of programs
Belgium strongly focuses on the quality of life rather than the quantity of life.

It is imperative to provide activities and outlets for the older population to promote healthy living and active aging.

Non-verbal communication speaks volumes.
PROFOUND CULTURAL EXPERIENCE

- Language barriers do not stop relationship building
- Miles apart, still several similarities between cultures and different countries
REFERENCES