

Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav - Celebrations of 75th Independence Anniversary of India - Healthy Aging!

It is an honor for all Indians to celebrate 75th year of India's independence as "Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav" excited and honored to write editorial during these celebrations from the Desk of Editor in chief of JMH, a prestigious journal dealing with issues of mid-life health.

India is the biggest democracy in the world and we have traversed these 75 years from 1947 to 2022, with tremendous leap forward in areas of agriculture, technology, health, education, industry, and advances in various sciences.

In health care, there is reduced maternal mortality from 2000/100,000 live births to 113/100,000 live births, and infant mortality rate reduced from 143/10,000 live births to 27.69/10,000 live births, and sharp rise in life expectancy rate from 32 years at the time of independence to 70.9 years in 2020, almost four times increase.

Coupled with all these is the movement of self-reliance - ATMANIRBHAR BHARAT.

This astronomical growth was possible because GOI floating many schemes such as National Health Mission and National Rural Health Mission and giving financial help.

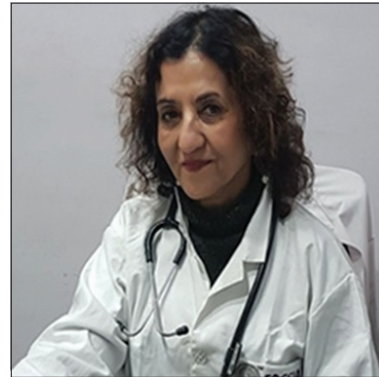
Despite all these efforts area where we still have to make inroads is mid-life health and healthy aging for that future focus should be on preventive health strategies.

Under the age of 15 years, population share which was 34.9% in 2005–2006, has come down to 26.5% in 2019–2021 (National Family Health Survey-5).

Although at this point considering our median age of 24 years in 2011, we may be considered young country we are definitely aging slowly and for that we need change in policies now NFHS-5-FAMILY HEALTH SURVEY-5 (NHFS-5) - comment by President of Center for policy Research-focus should be going beyond reproductive health policies and taking timely interventions to keep our aging mid-life healthy and productive.

We are living in an aging world globally and that trend was seen since 2000 and world population which was 702 million in 2011 is expected to be 1548, million in 2050 and this trend is more in middle-income and low-income countries as high-income countries like Japan has already experienced it.

Older people are a valuable resource for any society.



Maninder Ahuja

Aging is a natural phenomenon with opportunities and challenges. According to census 2011, India has 104 million older people (60+ years), constituting 8.6% of total population. Among the elderly (60+), females outnumber males.

Longer lives are one of our most remarkable collective achievements.

Considering this The United Nations announced "Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021–2030)" as a global collaboration, aligned with the last 10 years of the Sustainable Development Goals, that brings together governments, civil society, international agencies, professionals, academia, the media, and the private sector to improve the lives of older people, their families, and the communities in which they live.^[1]

Poor health severely undermines a person's quality of life and places substantial economic burdens on individuals and society at large. Behavioral and environmental factors contribute toward life span.^[2]

This calls for policies of health promotion and disease prevention and healthy behaviors.^[1]

Physical activity can not only reduce obesity and all related physical health problems and is basic pillar of positive health.^[2]

Barrier of gender bias in healthy aging is highlighted by the WHO in 2003.^[3]

"The biggest rate of noncommunicable diseases (NCD) increase will be in women because of biological difference, gender roles-as they don't look after their personal needs and there is social marginalization-all these factors expose women and men to different NCD risks."

Menopause transition increases the risk of MS, women have higher rates of obesity and this leads to their increased vulnerability to NCD, particularly diabetes.

While inherited genes have an undoubted role to play in the chance of maintaining good health or conversely a predilection to developing disease and chronic ill health, there is increasing evidence that up to 50% role in the lifespan is lifestyle modifications. There is enough evidence that physical activity improves well-being across many health domains throughout life, continues to offer important health benefits in older age groups, and tracks with a “healthy ageing” profile.^[2]

Rapid population aging poses a number of societal challenges, such as how to motivate middle-aged (age 40–64) and older adults (age 65+) to engage in behaviors that promote healthy and successful aging.

Required preventive health strategies which we should have are still to be recognized and it is pertinent to understand when the component of counseling and attitude change should be introduced about weight gain prevention.

Recent guidelines from Ranjan *et al.*^[4] about the management of weight and obesity in midlife women recommend that counseling and identification of patients should start from mid-forties.

Reality is that misperceptions about aging and older people are widely held in the general public, and these are mostly negative with preconceived ideas of aging being synonymous with illness, frailty, and debility. Moreover, these negative attitude of public and HCP needs a dramatic change (negative views on aging).^[5]

For the right messages, it is feasible now to reach out to larger populations as we have become technologically advance with even elderly populations using mobile, and in COVID-19, we proved that we could reach out to each and every nook and corner of country. Time is ripe to reach out for Digital Health for Forty plus keeping in line with the WHO agenda of Healthy Aging decade from 2020 to 2030.

The study by Brothers and Diehl^[5] proved feasibility of interventions program to change behavior and engage in physical activity.

The Aging^{Plus} program was designed to equip middle-aged and older adults with effective ways of countering negative misperceptions of aging that would otherwise undermine their health. This feasibility study represents the first step in the development, evaluation, and refinement of the Aging^{Plus} program.

Two more studies which highlighted the point that elderly populations can be encouraged and motivated to do more physical activity are by Sarkisian *et al.*^[6] and Wolff *et al.*^[7] as the lack of physical activity is the main reason responsible for obesity and chronic disease burden of mid-life population.

In the last few years, medical science has identified a new group within the senior citizen category, namely that of super-agers. The term refers to people in their 70s and 80s who have the mental or physical younger counterparts. With the world aging at a rapid rate, it is estimated that by capability of their decades 2030, there will be 34 nations with over 20% population above 65 years. Studies are being done on behaviors, habits, and health indicators of those >90 years of age.

A number of studies are going on globally on healthy aging, but many are concerned about providing facilities for care and community level and research is not enough about preventive health strategies implementation.^[8]

Future lies in preventive health strategies and may be artificial intelligence would lead the way by various applications and hand held gadgets but present belong to attitude change and increase in physical activity besides dietary changes, no smoking, and restricted use of alcohol.

Future research should involve feasibility of services at community level.

Maninder Ahuja

Dr. (Prof) (Hon) IMA and Director, Ahuja Health Care Services, Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Faridabad, Haryana, India
E-mail: Ahuja.maninder@gmail.com

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