

Significance of Geriatric Nutrition

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The average life span is now around 70 years and geriatric population contribute 7% of total population and if this trend continue definitely they will occupy large portion of the community. This rapidly increasing population is a new and important group in terms of social and health policy in the country. Our constitution also gave priority on these population. Evidence suggests more than 95% of the elderly people reported experiencing health problems and most reported multiple health problems. More health problems were reported by women compared to men and in the rural region compared to the urban. We know nutrition is the foundation of health and without good nutrition we can't expect sound health which may result big burden. It is widely known older persons are particularly prone to develop malnutrition. Most of the non-communicable diseases like diabetes, stroke, and hypertension starts due to faulty dietary habit. It is evidence based that taste and digestive capacity of the elder people are not same as like young and adult. Gradually and physiologically it decreases along with age.

Both macronutrients (carbohydrate, protein and fat) and micronutrients (Vitamin A, Iron, Calcium, Iodine, Zinc etc) are needed on the basis of equity. Micronutrients have key role in promoting health, preventing disease as well as keep them disease free. Sound knowledge on micronutrients can solve this problem. As far as i know there are no update nutrient intake standards at present which is specifically designed for the elderly in Bangladesh. I think preferences should be given on liking and disliking of the geriatric people in terms of food intake. Quality should come first rather than quantity. More empathy and patience is needed to make them understand about nutritional issue. Age specific and community specific large scale research on nutritional problem of aged groups is required. Community based geriatric friendly nutrition center can be built. Policy maker and concern authority can think about this issue because one day we will enter this age group and no prosperity possible neglecting this bulk group of population.