

# Care for Older People : Experiences from India



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# The Outline

- Ageing in India
- Healthcare system of India
- Older people's health issues
- Initiatives undertaken
- Ways forward



# Ageing in India

- Is compounded by poverty, under-development and isolation
- 77 million OP live in India, one out of every 10 OP in the world lives in India
- 40% OPs live below poverty level and about 80% OPs live in rural areas
- Life Expectancy has increased from 36 in 1951 to nearly 66 in 2008.
- LE in rural areas is still around or less than 60
- Feminization of ageing – by 2015, 51% of OP will be women
- By 2025, the number of OP in India will reach around 177 million

# Healthcare system of India

- Comprised of a Govt. sector and a more dominant private sector
- The spending on health is very low.
- Central Govt. spends 1.3% of its budget on health
- State Govts. spend around 4 to 5% on health.
- Private medical sector contributes 83% and the Govt. 17%.
- Limited coverage of health insurances
- Rural areas lack healthcare services, where 70% of India lives

# Healthcare system in India

## Resources

- Number of doctors - 503,900
- Extremely limited number of geriatricians
- Population per doctor - 1,916
- Number of registered nurses/midwives - 607,376
- Number of hospital beds - 665,639
- Population per hospital bed - 1,451
- Number of health centers (primary, public) SC – 137,006, PHC – 23,179, CHC – 2,913

# OP's Health Status in India

- Is impacted due to lack of health facilities in rural areas
- Large number of OPs live under poverty resulting into their poor health
- OPs are isolated and malnourished.
- Lack of focus on health education among elderly
- Geriatric healthcare gets little attention

# OPs' Health Status in India

## Major health problems

- Cardio-vascular diseases
- Mental health disorders
- Musculo-skeletal disorders
- Eye diseases
- Malnutrition and related health conditions
- Infectious diseases

# Initiatives undertaken

## By the Government

- Recognizes the need of better healthcare for OPs
- National Policy for Older People (NPOP) of 1999 stresses on the health needs of OPs
- Recently enhanced focus on geriatric medicine in training
- Special focus on older people in the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) in the form of geriatric counseling and trainings of staff
- Partnering with NGOs for health education and service delivery
- Social support

# Initiatives undertaken

## By NGOs

- A few NGOs in the country including Help Age India and GRAVIS are working actively
- Advocacy on age-friendly healthcare
- Community-based health education among the population
- Outreach medical services for OPs through medical camps and geriatric counseling
- Mobile Medical Units and homecare
- Specialized trainings of Community Health Workers

# Initiatives undertaken

- Specialized community-based programmes on eye-care, TB control and mental health
- Hygiene and sanitation promotion
- Community-based health funds
- Integration with developmental initiatives and social services

# Way ahead

- Continuous capacity building
- Networking of resources, forming rural health networks
- Health education
- Strengthening community based health funds
- Improving service delivery



# Ways forward

- Promoting GO-NGO partnerships
- Developing CHWs with special training on OPs health issues
- Focus on geriatric medicine in medical training
- Inter-sectoral partnerships



**THANKS**