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Aged care physiotherapy: Are we doing it right?

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Australians have shown a great increase in life span when comparing the statistics of mortality rates since 1890. Credit goes to the higher medical and social standards practiced in the country that helps number of deaths as a result of motor vehicle accidents or heart diseases. But Australia like all other places is facing the challenge to eradicate long term health issues in geriatric population such as stroke, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, heart diseases, osteoarthritis and osteoporosis. Despite failure in advanced medicine and surgery, physiotherapy helps restore normal health and fitness of individuals with such conditions. On the contrary, the Australian aged populations in the residential or aged care facilities, rural and remote areas are unable to receive regular physiotherapy treatments due to various reasons. Physiotherapy in aged care nursing homes focus on pain management by massage or heat packs, because government does not fund for other important goals of rehabilitation like, balance training, gait training, manipulations or strengthening. On the other hand, an average aged care physiotherapist earns from \$60K-\$101K annually, yet the number of physiotherapists working in aged care is less than other streams. The reasons behind less physiotherapists opting for aged care are numerous, which causes the undertrained nursing staff to provide pain management to residents in aged care facilities. The purpose of this study is to understand the barriers faced by aged population in Australia to take physiotherapy treatment. The researcher points out the current status of funding for aged care in nursing home and private health centers. The study is a helpful resource for physiotherapists in aged care facilities or those interested to join this field.

Biography

Nitish Mathew has completed his Bachelor's degree from MGM Institute of Health Sciences, India and Master's degree in Clinical Exercise Physiology from Waikato Institute, New Zealand. Over the years, he has worked in India, New Zealand and Australia as a Physiotherapist and Clinical Exercise Physiologist. He has received various awards for his contributions in sectors of rehabilitation, fitness training and social work. He has published 3 papers and is presently serving as an Aged Care Physiotherapist in Sydney.

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