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Interdisciplinary collaboration in geriatrics: implications for social work profession in Nigeria

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Introduction

With age comes the rising demand for health care and even more peculiarities to care giving. In addition to biological changes are socioeconomic factors that impact the health and treatment of the elderly population. The dynamics involved in providing adequate care for the elderly population as seen in developed societies reveals that there is no watertight compartment to knowledge and the need for interdisciplinary collaborations.

Methodology

This study embraces systematic review of selected articles published in PubMed, Elsevier, and Google Scholar, dated until 2023. Articles were searched out using keywords – geriatrics; interdisciplinary care; elderly; social work; elderly people; and Nigeria. The objective of this study was to establish the need for interdisciplinary care for the elderly population in Nigeria and the role of Social Work professionals.

Results

There is a global rise of the elderly population and developing nations like Nigeria with an estimated population of over 220 million people isn't left on the back burner. Nigeria has faced several socio-economic challenges that have impacted the health of this population, and such have also influenced the nature of care giving. The lack of certain basic social amenities and health insurance is a major impediment to providing substantive holistic care for the aged.

The study reveals the deficit in geriatric care facilities and an elderly care specialized professional knowledge gap in the healthcare sector.

Social workers in the health sector must be trained to recognize the dynamics and understanding of elderly care, bridging the gap and facilitating interdisciplinary care teams for proper diagnoses and adequate care for the elderly population. Unfortunately, social work is an emerging profession in Nigeria, thus, it will be faced with several challenges to its acceptance and establishing its role in the healthcare industry.

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