Physiotherapy in Semmelweis University Geriatrics Clinic and Center for Nursing Sciences

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The increasing global population of older and very elderly individuals poses significant challenges to healthcare systems, particularly in delivering efficient and sustainable care. Aging is associated with a variety of physiological changes, including reduced bone density, muscle strength, and motor coordination, often accompanied by joint stiffness — all contributing to an increased risk of falls and fractures. Regular physical activity is vital in preserving and restoring functional abilities necessary for daily life. Moreover, exercise reduces the severity and risk of age-related diseases and offers considerable benefits for elderly patients with chronic conditions.

Common geriatric conditions include musculoskeletal, neurological, and cardiovascular disorders, alongside mental health issues, balance impairments, and chronic pain. Practicing physiotherapy in a geriatric setting presents unique opportunities and challenges. While aiding older adults in regaining mobility and independence is deeply rewarding, physiotherapists often encounter physically demanding tasks, complex medical profiles, and emotional strain. Thus, geriatric physiotherapy requires a specialized set of skills and clinical expertise.

This research aims to highlight the essential role of physiotherapy and share professional experiences gained at a geriatric and nursing care Center. It emphasizes both the advantages and challenges faced by physiotherapists, with a specific focus on the application and outcomes of various therapeutic techniques, including Proprioceptive Neuromuscular Facilitation (PNF), Bobath concept, Constraint-Induced Movement Therapy (CIMT), passive movements, mobility and muscle-strengthening exercises, as well as balance and gait training in elderly patients.

The Center comprises two nursing units, one internal medicine unit, one active geriatric unit, and one chronic care unit, with a total capacity of 90 beds. Patients range in age from 45 to 97 years, with the majority presenting neurological and neurodegenerative disorders such as stroke, Parkinson’s disease, multiple sclerosis, and Alzheimer’s disease, alongside musculoskeletal conditions like pertrochanteric fractures and hip or knee total endoprostheses.

Clinical observations indicate that physiotherapy interventions result in notable improvements in muscle strength, coordination, mobility, balance, cardiopulmonary function, psychological well-being, and overall quality of life.

In conclusion, physiotherapy plays a crucial role in restoring function, reducing pain, and improving the quality of life in elderly populations. Its integration into geriatric and nursing care facilities represents a growing field that demands specialized training and offers vast potential for professional development.

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