Integrated geriatric care: Health, independence, dignity.

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Introduction

The field of geriatric care is constantly evolving, striving to improve the quality of life and health outcomes for older adults. Recent systematic reviews and meta-analyses shed light on a variety of effective interventions and crucial considerations in this domain. What we learn is that combining different approaches, tailored to the individual, can really boost physical function and overall quality of life [1].

This means that in geriatric care, we should focus on comprehensive assessments and personalized plans, moving beyond single-solution thinking. Let's talk about the impact of COVID-19 on our older population's quality of life. This systematic review and meta-analysis shows clear negative effects across mental health, social engagement, and physical well-being [2].

What this really means is that during major health crises, we need to quickly put in place specific support systems and targeted interventions for older adults to mitigate these significant challenges. Here's the thing about telehealth for older adults, especially those with multiple chronic conditions: it can be incredibly effective [3].

This highlights the potential for technology to bridge gaps in geriatric services, making healthcare more accessible and personalized. Addressing polypharmacy in older adults is crucial, and this systematic review and meta-analysis offers some solid insights [4].

It reveals that structured interventions, like medication reviews and pharmacist consultations, are effective in reducing the number of unnecessary drugs. This means a proactive, multidisciplinary approach can significantly improve medication safety and reduce adverse drug events in geriatric care. When it comes to managing behavioral and psychological symptoms of dementia, non-pharmacological interventions often get overlooked [5].

This systematic review underscores their efficacy, highlighting approaches like music therapy, reminiscence therapy, and tailored activities. The takeaway here is that individualized, person-centered non-drug strategies should be a cornerstone of dementia care, improving quality of life without the side effects of medication. Nutrition plays a massive role in combating frailty in older adults, and this systematic review confirms it [6].

It shows that targeted nutritional interventions, often combining protein supplementation with other micronutrients, can significantly improve strength and reduce frailty progression. This tells us that integrating dietary assessment and personalized nutritional support is a key component of effective geriatric care. Falling is a big concern for community-dwelling older adults, and this systematic review and meta-analysis points to multifactorial interventions as the most effective prevention strategy [7].

It's not just one thing; it's a combination of strength and balance training, home hazard assessments, and medication reviews that truly makes a difference. This means a comprehensive, individualized approach to fall prevention is essential in maintaining independence for our seniors. Social isolation and loneliness are pervasive issues, especially among older adults, and this systematic review digs into interventions designed to tackle them [8].

It finds that group-based activities, social skills training, and befriending programs can effectively reduce feelings of isolation. The implication for geriatric care is clear: fostering social connections and meaningful engagement is just as critical as addressing physical health. Integrating palliative care into geriatric medicine is a critical, yet sometimes challenging, endeavor [9].

This systematic review reveals the benefits of such integration, showing improved symptom management, better quality of life, and enhanced communication for older patients with serious illnesses. What this means is that a collaborative approach, combining both geriatric and palliative expertise, can profoundly improve care for complex older adults. When we talk about supporting older adults to age in place, technology holds immense potential [10].

This systematic review looks at technology-enabled interventions, finding that smart home devices, remote monitoring, and communication platforms can significantly enhance safety, independence, and social connection. The message here is clear: strategic use of technology can empower older adults to maintain their autonomy and well-being in their own homes.

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Received: 07-Apr-2025, Manuscript No. aapcgp-204; **Editor assigned:** 09-Apr-2025, Pre QC No. aapcgp-204 *(PQ)*; **Reviewed:** 29-Apr-2025, QC No. aapcgp-204; **Revised:** 08-May-2025, Manuscript No. aapcgp-204 *(R)*; **Published:** 19-May-2025, DOI: 10.35841/aapcgp-8.3.204

Citation: Brown D. Integrated geriatric care: Health, independence, dignity. aapcgp. 2025;08(03):204.

Conclusion

This collection of systematic reviews and meta-analyses highlights critical areas in geriatric care, emphasizing personalized, comprehensive, and multidisciplinary interventions. Frailty in older adults can be effectively addressed through multicomponent and nutritional interventions, improving physical function, strength, and overall quality of life. The negative impact of health crises like COVID-19 on older adults' well-being underscores the need for rapid, targeted support systems.

Technology plays a vital role, with telehealth improving access and outcomes for those with chronic conditions, and smart home solutions enhancing safety and independence for aging in place. Medication management is also key; structured interventions successfully reduce polypharmacy, improving patient safety. For dementia, non-pharmacological approaches like music and reminiscence therapy are crucial for managing behavioral symptoms, offering person-centered care without drug side effects.

Fall prevention in community-dwelling seniors is best achieved through multifactorial strategies combining exercise, home assessments, and medication reviews. Beyond physical health, social well-being is paramount; interventions addressing loneliness and isolation via group activities and befriending programs are effective. Finally, integrating palliative care into geriatric medicine significantly improves symptom management and quality of life for older patients with serious illnesses. Collectively, these findings advocate for a holistic, integrated, and responsive approach to geriatric care, leveraging both traditional and technological solutions to enhance the health, independence, and dignity of older adults.

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Citation: *Brown D. Integrated geriatric care: Health, independence, dignity. aapcgp. 2025;08(03):204.*