

## **Older people and Primary Health Care (PHC)**

The world is ageing. Today, there are some 600 million people aged 60 and over worldwide; this total will double by 2025 and will reach virtually two billion by 2050. The majority of older people will be living in developing countries that are often the least prepared to confront the challenges of rapidly ageing societies.

Increased longevity is a triumph for public health and the result of social and economic development. However many individuals will face, as they age, the risk of having at least one chronic disease, such as hypertension, diabetes and osteo-muscular conditions.

All countries need to be prepared to address the consequences of demographic trends. Dealing with the increasing burden of chronic diseases requires health promotion and disease prevention intervention at community level as well as disease management strategies within their health care system.

WHO recognizes the critical role that PHC centres play in maintaining health of older people worldwide and the need for these centres to be adapted and accessible to older populations: PHC is the principle vehicle for the delivery of health care services at the most local level of a country's health system.

WHO in collaboration with partners and Ministries of Health from developed and developing countries, has produced an age-friendly PHC toolkit aimed at sensitizing and educating PHC providers about the needs of older clients.

The toolkit addresses key concerns such as comprehensive and integrated care; continuum of care; physical and social environment; and PHC workers' core competencies. It has been endorsed by WONCA (World Organization of National Colleges and Academic Associations of General Practitioners/Family Physicians), IAGG (International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics), IFA (International Federation on Ageing), HAI (HelpAge International) and the NYAM (New York Academy of Medicine) among others.

**Source:** WHO - [http://www.who.int/ageing/primary\\_health\\_care/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/ageing/primary_health_care/en/index.html)