

Introduction

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In most industrial countries the population of elderly and even very old people is continuously growing. Regardless of the fact that many remain active and in good health up to quite an old age, these demographic changes are a major challenge for the health system, not least from an economic perspective. The goal of geriatric medicine is not in being a first line to treat single health conditions, but rather to take care of the patient with all of their personal preferences and abilities and disabilities, in order to preserve their way of living as autonomously as possible.

In this context, healthcare providers have to develop and evaluate new services to tackle the specific needs of this patient group. Clinical pharmacists have been shown to be a beneficial part of the care team for the elderly. From the scientific literature we have a lot of information about the problems arising from inappropriate prescribing and polypharmacy, for instance, and we have knowledge of

how to deal with them. What matters in the end is the care we as healthcare professionals can give our patients through made-to-measure services based on sound scientific evidence.

I would like to finish this introductory word to this important theme issue that strongly supports the development of clinical pharmacy services in the growing older population by quoting Professor Steve Hudson (in memoriam), a great mind in pharmaceutical care and clinical pharmacy practice. He said: “Information is not knowledge, knowledge is not understanding, understanding is not wisdom, wisdom is not empathy, empathy is not care. Care adds quality to life.”

Markus Lampert
President, European Society of Clinical Pharmacy