Health Needs of the Elderly

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Health Needs of The Elderly

Gill Garrett

SECOND EDITION

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In memory of my parents . . . and for David and Rhiannon, past, present and future generations

Contents

<i>Foreword to the series</i>	ix
<i>Preface to the second edition</i>	x
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xi
<i>A note on the series style</i>	xii

Part 1 Ageing

1 The reality of ageing	3
2 The physiology of ageing	6
Biological clock theory	6
Error accumulation theory	6
Waste product accumulation theory	6
Chemical cross-linkage theory	6
Auto-immune theory	7
The musculo-skeletal system	7
The excretory systems—skin and renal tract	7
The gastro-intestinal tract	8
The cardiovascular system	8
The respiratory system	9
The nervous system	9
The reproductive systems	9
3 The psychology of ageing	11
Personality	11
Memory	12
Learning	12
Creativity	13
Intelligence	13
4 Sociological aspects of ageing	16
Retirement	16
Family changes	19
Loneliness	20
Role reversal	21
5 Demographic and economic aspects of ageing	23
How many elderly people?	23
Where are they now?	25
How well off are they?	25

Part 2 Approaches to Ageing: Evolution of Care

6 Family and welfare approach	29
Family care	30
7 Health services approach	32

Part 3 Sharing the Caring

8 Community care	37
Maintenance of health and independence	37
Provision of community services	41
When the time comes . . .	48
9 Hospital provision	58
Placing of elderly care beds	59
Assessment and rehabilitation	59
Continuing care	60
Day hospitals	62
Other provision	64
Liaison between hospital and community	64
10 Nursing approach	66
Preservation of dignity and individuality	66
Promotion of effective communication	67
Self-care	68
Education of the patient and his family	69
Multi-disciplinary teamwork	71

Part 4 Individualised Care

11 Nursing process	77
Assessment	77
Planning care	85
Implementation	87
Evaluation	88
12 Illness in the elderly	89
The components of basic nursing care	89
Intellectual failure	90
Instability and immobility	94
Incontinence	99
13 Surgery and the elderly	104
Assessment and pre-operative care	104
Emergency surgery	105
Anaesthesia	105
Post-operative management	109
14 Drugs and the elderly	110
The altered presentation of disease	110
Pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics	110
Multiple pathology and multiple medication	111
Correct drug-taking	112
15 Dying and death	114
Bereavement	115
The last achievement	117

Part 5 Conclusion: a Future for Old Age

16 Towards the twenty-first century	121
Implications for planning	121
Preparing nurses to meet future needs	125
Index	127

Foreword to the series

This series of textbooks offers a fresh approach to the study of nursing. The aim is to give those beginning a career in nursing, and those already qualified, opportunities for reflection to broaden their approach to nursing education and to identify their own nursing values. The text includes material currently required by those preparing for qualification as a nurse and offers a basis for developing knowledge by individual studies. It should also assist qualified nurses returning to nursing, and those wishing to gain further insight into the nursing curriculum.

The authors of each book in the series are from widely differing nursing backgrounds, and, as experienced teachers of nursing or midwifery, they are well aware of the difficulties faced by nursing students searching for meaning from a mass of factual information. The nurse has to practise in the real world, and in reality nursing students need to learn to practise with confidence and understanding. The authors have therefore collaborated to illustrate this new perspective by making full use of individual nursing care plans to present the knowledge required by the nursing student in the most appropriate and relevant way. These textbooks can therefore be used in a wide variety of nursing programmes.

The practice of nursing — as a profession and as a career — and the education of the nurse to fulfil her role are affected by both national and international trends. The Nurses, Midwives and Health Visitors Act 1979 in the United Kingdom, the Treaty of Rome and the European Community nursing directives 1977, as well as the deliberations and publications of the International Council of Nurses and the World Health Organization, all make an impact upon the preparation and the practice of the nurse throughout the world.

Nursing values may not have changed over the past one hundred years, but society and the patterns of both life and care have changed, and are constantly changing. It is particularly important, therefore, to restate the essentials of nursing in the light of current practice and future trends.

Throughout this series the focus is on nursing and on the individual — the person requiring care and the person giving care — and emphasis is laid on the need for continuity between home and hospital care. *Neighbourhood Nursing — A Focus for Care*, the Report of the Community Nursing Review under the chairmanship of Julia Cumberlege (HMSO, 1986), has drawn attention to this need. The developing role of the nurse in primary care and in health education is reflected throughout this series. The authors place their emphasis on the whole person, and nursing care studies and care plans are used to promote understanding of the clinical, social, psychological and spiritual aspects of care for the individual.

Each book introduces the various aspects of the curriculum for general nursing: the special needs (1) of those requiring acute care; (2) of the elderly; (3) of children; (4) of the mentally ill; and (5) of the mentally handicapped. The latter category is dealt with by a new text in *The Essentials of Nursing* — edited by a well-known and respected nurse for the mentally handicapped and with contributors experienced in differing aspects of caring for people with mental handicap. The text on maternity and neonatal care, written by a midwifery teacher, provides the material for nursing students and would be helpful to those undertaking preparation for further health visiting education.

The authors wish to acknowledge their gratitude for the assistance they have received from members of the Editorial Board, and from all those who have contributed to their work — patients and their relatives, students, qualified nurses and colleagues — too numerous to mention by name. To all those nurse teachers who have read some of the texts, offering constructive criticism and comment from their special knowledge, we offer our grateful thanks. Last, we thank Elizabeth Horne for her contribution to the physiology material in the text, and Mary Waltham for her help with this second edition.

Preface to the second edition

Since the first edition of *Health Needs of the Elderly* appeared in 1983 the demographic tide has continued to alter our population profile, and the need to reconsider our health approaches and to plan for future care becomes ever more urgent. In this second edition I have updated the original material and looked more to the future for our ageing society. Further to the comments of helpful colleagues and reviewers, I have included additional reading suggestions in each chapter, both to assist with the Pauses for Thought and to enable readers to follow up areas of personal interest.

1987

Gill Garrett

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In the second my thanks are especially due to the very many elderly people with whom I have been privileged to work, in both hospitals and the community, over the past twenty years and from whom I have learned so much; and to the nursing students who, more recently, have helped me to learn further through their own learning.

My greatest debt of gratitude, however, is owed to the person who, more than anyone else, taught me through his own ageing experience of the needs of the elderly and who encouraged me to write about them—but who did not live to see the publication of the product of that encouragement—my father.

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The remaining photographs were provided by the author.

A note on the series style

Throughout this book, in keeping with the other titles in this series, the term *nursing student* has been used to mean *both* student or pupil nurses *and* trained nurses who are undertaking post-basic training or who are keeping up to date with the recent literature. For clarity and consistency throughout the series the nurse is described as *she*; this is done without prejudice to men who are nurses or nursing students. Similarly, the patient is sometimes referred to as *he*, when the gender is not specifically mentioned.

Care plans, which are used throughout the books in this series, are indicated by a coloured corner flash to distinguish them from the rest of the text.