

1st
WORLD
CONGRESS



19 – 22 March, 2012
ON HEALTHY AGEING

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Organised by:



Malaysian Healthy Ageing Society

Co-Sponsored:



World Health
Organization

Promoting and advocating for age-friendly healthcare in the Thar Desert, India



Prakash Tyagi

1st World Congress on Healthy Ageing

Kuala Lumpur, March 2012

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India and the Thar Desert

- The second largest country in the world, India has high number of people above 60 years of age. Over 80 million.
- Life Expectancy is touching 70 mark and rising.
- More elderly in rural areas and majority live below the poverty line.
- Feminization and ageing
- Double burden of disease.





The Thar Desert

- One of the Most underdeveloped parts of India and of the world.
- Is in the north-west of the country.
- Arid, dry and hot.
- Receives less than 200 mm of rain in a full year.
- Water and food insecurity.
- Major health issues



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The Thar Desert

- Is home to over 23 million people, most dense desert globally
- Around 2 million elderly live in the area
- Older people have great difficulties due to drought and poverty.
- Malnutrition, diseases.
- Poor health facilities
- Very low health awareness

About GRAVIS

- GRAVIS is an NGO working for community development in Thar
- The organization covers over 1,000 villages and a population of over 1 million people with its work.
- Strong focuses on water and food security, healthcare and drought mitigation.
- Ageing is an area of major attention.

About GRAVIS

- Partners with Help Age International
- Is in operation since last 29 years.
- Is located in the heart of the Thar Desert with 16 field offices.
- Has facilitated the formation of over 2,500 Community Based Groups including over 100 Older People's association and Self Help Groups of older people.

GRAVIS' work on ageing and health

- Runs a fully equipped rural hospital catering to over 40,000 older people in the region.
- Provides indoor and outdoor medical services.
- The hospital has all facilitated including a fully equipped eye care unit.
- In a year, we treat over 10,000 older people.
- Over 2,000 eye surgeries are conducted every year.



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GRAVIS' work on ageing and health

- GRAVIS has set up 4 satellite clinics to provide screening and basic treatment services
- The organization runs a community-based programme focusing on controlling TB, AIDS and Malaria.
- Outreach medical team organizes over 60 medical camps every year.
- Over 500 Village Health Workers have been trained on age-friendly healthcare.

GRAVIS' work on ageing and health

- GRAVIS is very active on advocating for promotion of age-friendly healthcare.
- It has organized a number of advocacy seminars and workshop.
- The organization also has a deep interest on researching ageing and health.
- It actively communicated with government health departments and policy makers in the context of ageing and health.

GRAVIS' work on ageing and health

- Has produced eight publications on Older People's health.
- Is partnering in a regional project to research and promote Self Care
- Will be launching a research study on double burden of disease
- Has been training counselors to provide mental health support



Our learning

- The older people have a great potential of contributing in development programmes.
- Locally designed training manuals are very effective to raise health awareness.
- Good nutrition is the key, and hence there is a great need of nutrition education among elderly.
- Because of the double burden of disease, health education needs to focus on both infections and non-communicable diseases.



Our learning

- Water quality is another major challenge leading to waterborne diseases among elderly.
- Village Health Workers are well received in the communities.
- There is a greater need for geriatric training.
- Self care models need to be promoted further.

Our future

- VHWs – expand further
- Qualitative service delivery
- Research capacity – enhance
- Partner with the Government
- Village Health Funds
- Continued advocacy



THANKS

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