**Health Issues for the Aging**

Aging among the elderly population brings along a number of challenges. Most of these challenges are largely attributed to health issues. One such health issue is the inadequate distribution of palliative health care. Throughout the United States history, health care has largely focused on curative treatment. Even though the last decades have seen an increase in palliative treatment, many of its aspects remain unresolved. Most of the aging population still lack access to palliative care, and for some, the care received hardly meets their needs. Palliative care refers to a holistic approach in caring for patients who have advanced and progressive diseases. An important part of ensuring that the elderly population lead healthier and quality lives entails limiting their prospects of surviving in the long-term (Aldridge et al., 2016). Chronic illnesses, for instance, lower the quality of life among the aging notwithstanding the difficulty in managing illnesses. Even so, aging does not have to be a huge burden on the elderly. The existing health policies and structures have however been part of the cause for the uneven and inadequate provision of palliative care to the aging population.

**Resolution to Resolving Palliative Care Inequalities Among the Aging**

The interest in the need for the aging has led many to seek answers on the possible solution to ensuring that palliative care is available and accessible to the older adult population. One of the suggested solutions is integrating palliative care into the mainstream health services (Seymour & Cassel, 2017). By doing so, various aspects of palliative care such as having an in-depth analysis of who needs palliative care and how best it can be provided will be made possible. Ideally, not giving the desired attention to palliative care has been one of the reasons for the significant gaps in its provision. The integration of palliative care into mainstream health services will, therefore, enable early management of terminal illnesses among the aging as well as improved health (Aldridge et al., 2016). Further, by integrating it into the mainstream health services, the disparities in palliative care will be lessened as palliative care will be given priority like curative treatment.

**Attempts to Integrate Palliative Care into Main Stream Health Services**

In spite of the inequalities in palliative care provision, there have been attempts albeit dismal in integrating palliative care. For instance, a survey conducted in most of the cancer centers in the United States shows how more attention and effort has been accorded palliative care (Hui & Bruera, 2016). However, this is just one aspect of the palliative care needs. While cancer remains one of the chronic illnesses that the aging have had to grapple with, conditions such as dementia have not received similar attention even though they pose health challenges to the elderly suffering from it. Persons suffering from advanced stages of dementia for instance usually get health care either from emergency services instead of specialized health professionals despite their condition requiring very complex needs.  While psychiatric symptoms and chronic pain accompany advanced dementia, the patients diagnosed with the disease rarely get palliative care.

**Barriers Facing the Proper Integration of Palliative Care**

Even though integrating palliative care into the mainstream health services would be one of the most efficient solutions in lessening palliative care disparities among the aged. There are a number of barriers facing effective implementation. First, it is not often an easy task identifying those that need palliative care. One of the reasons for this is that palliative care is often considered a last resort having made efforts to treat an illness and as such the possible palliative care needs are often not prioritized at the onset. Secondly, conditions such as dementia make it difficult to tell at what stage an older adult will need palliative care.  Thirdly, most of the health professionals that attend to these patients are often not specially trained to detect and understand the needs of the elderly in need of palliative care. Collectively, these barriers make it rather difficult for there to be a proper integration of such care into mainstream health services.

**Analysis of the Options for Funding in Palliative Care**

The funding of palliative care is central to its provision. As such, the funding models that are adopted have an influence on the development and provision of palliative care services. The integration of palliative care into mainstream health services raises issues on developing funding mechanisms (Groeneveld et al., 2017). It is therefore of importance that the funding mechanisms be properly understood and cautiously used so as to uphold best practice. Ideally, the funding models that are adopted in palliative care service provision should ultimately be positively reflected in the nature of care given and the outcomes. Such a measure is essential in illustrating whether the adopted models are useful and efficient, and how far they go in ensuring that palliative care services are adequately and efficiently offered.

**Recommendations**

The current state of palliative care provision calls for a number of measures to be taken. Such measures are necessary in order to minimize or eliminate disparities brought about by inequalities in palliative care provision. Further, it is to ensure that the elderly that are in need get to access palliative care and that those attending to them are well specialized. As a recommendation, there should be more in-depth diagnosis among the elderly in order to establish that any palliative care needs are identified early and that proper measures are pursued. Proper health policies targeting palliative care among the aging is one of the important steps that ought to be considered in health policy formulation. The rationale for this is that as opposed to merely being an end to life process, palliative care is important in helping the affected lead normal lives even though survival chances are minimal (Salins, 2014). There is as such a need for a shift in the attitudes associated with palliative care.

**Conclusion**

Evidently, palliative care remains an issue of concern among the aging in society, more so in view of how one’ s health and generally their quality of life is affected. Therefore, palliative care service provision by being a component of the mainstream health care will be essential in seeing to it that equal attention is accorded to palliative care as is the case in curative care among other populations. More importantly, however, the structures that are in place are key in terms of how well palliative care will be offered to the elderly persons that need it. These structures include the funding mechanisms as well as the expertise of those that handle the elderly with palliative care.

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