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Editorial Open Access

Designing New Ways of Aging: Towards Age Friendly Policies and Societies

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Editorial

Population aging is becoming a global challenge. Discussing longevity and later life are often considered either as a social or anthropological subject. In a larger framework, it is deeply related to health care, pharmaceutical, biotechnology, new technologies, architectures, Design and demographic issues. Aging and the desired healthy aging is a multidimensional issue.

Defining new types of aging

Defining Aging is also becoming a trendy issue because we are moving towards different types of "aging" in contemporary societies [1,2].

Social and health policies have an important role and responsibility in defining these new types of "aging". They can provide a "value added" environment for healthy and active aging. Living longer, but also healthier and actively can save a lot on health care expenditures and can even generate profits for the society through trans generational collaborations, sharing the wisdom and experience of the elderly with younger generations to solve everyday problems.

The healthy aging programs, prevention and innovative pharmaceutical treatments will definitely increase survival rates for the aging population, even if most evolutionary biologists define aging as a decrease in survival rate [2].

Living a long life is an opportunity for the humanity. However, some politicians and health economists view longer life as a burden for the government because they may find new solutions for financing the long care and increasing number of retirement.

A practical solution at long run is investing in healthy and active aging by optimizing life time and generativity of the older adults. Investing in prevention and regenerative medicine can also shape the new aging arena.

Living actively and independently

New technologies help older adults to stay independent in their lives as long as possible, they have much to gain from bringing technology into their daily lives [3,4]. The use of new technologies and e-Health depends on accessibility and education for the elderly, the need to be informed about the advantages of these new technologies and also they need training to be able to use these products in their everyday life.

Providing an appropriate environment such as smart homes or smart cities and supporting the elderly to maintain their independence as long as possible, not only has an impact on their life quality, but may also decrease the costs of health care systems [3,5].

Smart home technology can also be defined as "using basic and assistive devices to build an environment in which many features in the home are automated and where devices can communicate with each other". Smart home devices collect physiological, locational, and movement data, which can then be used for early detection and intervention by health care providers, residents, and their families.

New technologies that can monitor behavior or activity remotely through the use of sensors, data and video recorders, can promise to maintain the independence of the elderly.

Special training for the young and elderly is required to enable "Age friendly" researches and studies. There is also an increasing demand for e-health and other new technologies such as health applications for the elderly. Many users can find help through available online guidelines to find out about the use of applications and websites.

"Age friendly Design" can also enhance the facility to use autonomy and independence through the design and development of user-centered objects and clothes specially made for the elderly.

Meanwhile, there is also need to solve the problem of resistance to new technologies among some of the older adults. The disengagement from the digital world can constitute a significant reduction in quality of life for these people.

These extra years of life and these demographic changes have some profound implications for each of us, as well as for societies in which we live. They offer unprecedented opportunities, and will likely a fundamental impact on the way we lead our lives, the things we aspire, and the type of relationship we have with each other [1]. How will society change and how will it adapt to this new situation? What new roles will older people play? The consequences of this change are social and economic.

New social policies are desired to keep the active aging population on job markets. To keep the aging population active the policy makers may consider the generativity of the elderly as a real fact.

However, generativity has not yet received enough attention in aging studies. In theory generativity was considered to be a stage in midlife. According to Erikson, older people should maintain a dignified generative function and proposed that grandparenthood offered individuals a second chance at generativity [6]. The idea that generativity was an important contributor to a successful aging process was proposed by other authors as well. Baltes et al. mention generativity and wisdom as integral elements of a normative definition of an ideal state in old age. Achieving generativity, along with good health, would therefore be an important indicator of successful aging [7].

Generativity in later life may also depend on environmental factors such as availability of volunteer service roles as influenced by social policy, and by efforts to empower older adults in order to overcome traditional barriers such as poverty and isolation [8]. Erikson also mentioned that generativity drivers are based on inner needs and external societal forces [6].

Aging at digital arena can have multiple new types, it can be regenerative, positive, collaborating with new generations and having a real impact on designing a better future for the humanity by providing new social relationship.

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