

## The Contextualization of Comprehensive Geriatric Assessment

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Dr. Teresa Kinyari discusses the issue of Geriatric Assessment in Kenya in the International Association of Gerontology and Geriatric newsletter.

Routine disease screening among older persons may not easily distinguish healthy aging from frailty or disability in low income countries (LICs). Clinical management of all adults is a similar problem as little attention has been paid to the specific measurement of cognitive and physiological decline associated with healthy aging. A review of the principles of development of tools for Comprehensive Geriatric Assessment (CGA) and opportunities for capacity building in a multidisciplinary approach to CGA is critical for LICs. In high income countries, more specific tools have revolutionized the care of older patients, especially those with frailty and disability related to cancer and cardiovascular disease. The focus on CGA has been in cognitive impairment and rapid functional decline. However, there is a great need to contextualize the cognitive tests in the socioeconomic and cultural environments of older person. In addition, strengthening health and the community system is required to achieve the teamwork in CGA in LICs. The current harmonization of service delivery into primary health care (PHC) needs to include CGA using a multidisciplinary and multispectral approach. Geriatric services should be included in the expansion of screening and management of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) including trauma from falls - one of the geriatric giants in clinical assessment. Capacity building should focus on empowering a middle level care workforce in health and social work and related services in CGA especially in LICs where task shifting is critical in provision of health care. Strengthening emergency care for older persons in health facilities is an emerging need as longevity improves, especially among the urban and rural poor. Currently, the focus is on older person's lifestyle, while social and health related factors need to be integrated into the national response to improve the health status of the citizen. A collaborative effort to identify priority needs for older adults in each country will provide opportunities for improving their quality of life.