

Effect of Chronic Disease on the Aging Population

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Abstract. This essay is written to study the effect of chronic diseases on the aging population. The target of this study is the aging population as well as the future generation. This study acts as a guide for the aging population in terms of the different chronic diseases and their effects on humans. In addition, this study also acts as a catalyst for the future generation in terms of prevention methods and guidelines for a healthier lifestyle. This study used a combination of previous experiments and studies as well as public health disease prevention brochures to determine the optimum study methods. Overall, this study concludes that chronic disease within the aging population is inevitable, however with different ways of prevention methods, such as a regular exercise routine and a healthy eating diet, the probability of a lethal chronic disease can be reduced.

Keywords: Chronic Disease, Aging Population, Prevention Methods.

1. Introduction

The aging population has a greater affinity for chronic diseases such as heart attack, stroke, or cancer in modern society. The increase in the probability of chronic diseases has made it obligatory for the elderly population to work a greater amount of time to prepare for their retirement. To promote a healthy aging process, society must overhaul the image of the stereotypical senior citizen and establish a friendly environment for senior assistance. A clash of ideology between the Chinese and US government in response to the growing concern over chronic disease in the aging population. The US government responded by initiating policies that reflect the health impact pyramid. In contrast, the Chinese government created national policies and programs that rely on the incentive of its citizens.

In modern-day society, the presence of fast and cheap luxury food and items has led the population to consume more calories than recommended. Chronic overeating of unhealthy food has resulted in significant health issues over time. A prolonged state of binge eating may lead to obesity, if the current population continues to live lavishly with unhealthy food, obesity will become the catalyst for more lethal health issues such as heart attack and stroke [1]. In addition, a lack of active exercise will also increase the likelihood of chronic health problems as the current population ages. A sedentary lifestyle is a major vector for lethal chronic diseases such as heart disease and type II diabetes [2]. As the current society becomes accustomed to the sedentary lifestyle due to the lack of physical exercise, society will be more prone to be plagued by the effects of chronic diseases such as cancer and type II diabetes in the future.

The principal of these studies is regarding chronic health problems for the aging population. A correlation is observed as the significant increase in age drastically increases the likelihood of elders developing chronic health disorders. The field of research regarding this study is the field of gerontology. Gerontology is the study of aging as well as the health of elders within the perspectives of physiology, psychology, public health, and social science. Although the field of gerontology has had extension studies, some limitations the field has are consistent methods of delaying aging as well as socioeconomic issues regarding the increase in the aging population. In terms of genetic evidence of aging, different conclusions are drawn based on the DNA evidence of aging as well as the location of coding. In addition, although DNA has evidence of coding for the process of aging, it is difficult to correlate the finding with delaying the process of aging. In terms of physiological evidence for aging, various factors of environmental exposure have different effects on different people. Factors that may have detrimental effects on an individual may have little to no effect on a different individual.

In terms of aging, the different effects of mutagens in different individuals pose a challenge for gerontology as it is difficult to predict the effect such mutations have on the aging population. In terms of the socioeconomic factors in the exponential increase in the aging population, the increase in the aging population has resulted in a significant economic downturn, and methods of prevention of the economic downturn are out of reach for this field. Inro this study, previous research, and findings are used to observe how chronic disease has a significant effect on the aging population's lifestyle and different methods and approaches in relieving the pressure of aging.

2. Chronic Disease's effect on the elderly

Chronic diseases have a significant effect on the aging population's physical and mental health and economic prosperity. Chronic diseases restrain the aging population's daily activities due to their effect on physical health. Common symptoms seen throughout different chronic diseases are pain, fatigue, and mood disorders [3]. The constant agony and lethargy caused by chronic diseases may discourage the aging population from physical exercises and daily activities, which drastically exacerbate their physical health. Subsequently, the limitation of daily activities and physical health will result in the worsening of the aging population's mental health. Due to the significant decline in physical abilities from chronic diseases, the elderly may not be able to execute their lifestyle as proficiently as before, this will result in a negative atmosphere looming over the elder's minds. Whether it is trying to cope with the diagnosis, the symptoms, or with the new lifestyle, it is common for the development of mental disorders and conditions due to chronic diseases [4]. The symptoms of chronic diseases may severely affect the life expectancy of the aging population. The lethal effect of chronic diseases on physical health subsequently decreases the life expectancy of the aging population. The addition of each chronic symptom and disease will directly decrease the total number of years the aging population may live [5]. The constant treatment methods and diagnosis may result in high economic pressure on the aging population which may bankrupt their life savings. The direct cost, such as the prescription of medication and health services, and indirect costs, such as loss of motivation for work, due to chronic diseases can be suffocating with any support [6].

3. Suggestions for the aging population

Due to the substantial increase in the likelihood of chronic disease, a significant increase in anxiety within the aging population regarding attempts and effectiveness of preventing chronic disease. In order to better prepare and prevent chronic diseases, a regular clinical checkup for chronic diseases may give the population more assurance in terms of their conditions. In addition, having a regular exercise schedule as well as a healthy diet may yield a more gradual and healthy prevention method. Some of the things that the aging population may do on their own include having a regular exercise schedule and having a healthy dietary plan. Having regular exercise allows the elders to be more active and less affected by mental disorders. When exercising, individuals have a reduced chance of developing mental disorders as well as an increase in the speed of the recovery process [7]. In addition, having a healthy dietary plan is also a great prevention method for chronic diseases. Having health can give the aging population a more positive outlook due to having more energy provided by greater nutrients, in addition, a healthier diet may reduce stress and cholesterol [8]. In terms of interventions, the government may be able to introduce, the establishment of public clinics as well as hospitals may result in greater public health. Having a greater number of clinics may give the aging population more assurance of their own health and give the population the information they need to do what is best for their health.

3.1. Promote a healthy aging process

In order to promote a healthy aging process, society needs to overhaul the standard depiction of how elders are viewed. By changing how the aging population is viewed in society, greater support

is placed on the aging population's physical and mental health. Due to the stereotypical image of elders, as being seen as incompetent and fragile, the societal perceptive of ageism and prejudice is established [9]. The ageism of seniors as weak and inept has detrimental effects on the elder's self-image. Establishing an active and productive image of the elderly will relieve the negative connotation of the aging population. In addition, an age-friendly environment and an aligning health system must be established to advocate for a welcoming environment for the aging population. Initiating age-friendly assistance, such as ramps and handrails, promotes greater acceptance within society towards the elders. The establishment of simple but beneficial changes promotes the well-being of elders as well as a healthy aging process [10]. By establishing an age-friendly and inclusive environment, a positive correlation is observed within the aging population's physical and mental health. Furthermore, the alignment of the health system establishes greater trust between the elders and the health organization. The opening of public clinics in areas of need, as well as supplying medical materials to practitioners, will promote greater care for the aging population and promote greater accountability. Through establishing a responsible and trusting liaison between the practitioner and the patients, patients have a greater incentive to trust the words of the practitioner which convey a faster and more effective treatment plan [11]. In establishing proper and dedicated clinics, the greater trust between the aging population and the medical staff promotes a healthy aging process. Nevertheless, the concern for chronic diseases intensifies as the elder age. In terms of the approach to relieving the concern regarding chronic diseases, a diversion is observed between the US and Chinese governments' approaches.

3.2. US government approach

Regarding the US government's approach to the growing concern regarding chronic disease in the aging population, a significant amount of attention is focused on policies that reflect the public health pyramid. In terms of encouraging individual efforts, the US government promoted counseling and education to educate the aging population regarding chronic diseases and prevention. The introduction of clinicians and practitioners within rural areas expands the coverage of medical intervention for people in need, in addition, a greater number of supplies and resources gives the clinicians as well as the patients more options to pursue a cure for disease [12]. By connecting with a public clinic, the aging population is better at coming to terms with the loss of physical function or general well-being due to chronic diseases. Furthermore, the establishment of public health policy and healthcare programs can promote a long-lasting protective intervention for the aging population. The cost of public health programs and health policies for neurological diseases was 355 billion dollars [13]. Through long-lasting protective intervention, health, and financial support gradually relieved people's concerns regarding chronic diseases and health care. Finally, the US government's socioeconomic policies regarding chronic disease provide greater and earlier financial aid through reformations in retirement plans. In an extension of the CARES act, the US government extended the retirement plan to more elders and provided favorable tax options. The socioeconomic policies significantly alleviate the burden of retirement costs for seniors as a significant expansion is established for individuals who are qualified for the retirement plan, in addition, the increase in the loaning duration gives additional time for individuals to repay their debt, thereby relieving the stress of debt and increasing payment [14]. By increasing the limit and sponsorship of retirement reliefs in terms of qualifying elders, greater economic benefits can go to chronic disease treatments. In contrast to the US government, the Chinese government established national policies and programs in response to the people's concern regarding the chronic disease.

3.3. Chinese Government Approach

In terms of the Chinese government's approach towards chronic diseases in the aging population, the Chinese government established overarching national policies and educational programs to relieve the social pressure of aging. The Chinese government drastically increased fatty and sugary food taxes to discourage the public from purchasing food. The taxation of fatty and sugary food will

discourage industries from producing fatty food and curb the supply and demand chain between customers and companies in order to promote a healthier lifestyle [15]. Due to the substantial increase in fast-food brands in China, the obesity rate, especially in the aging population due to lack of physical ability to exercise, has drastically increased. The Chinese government's approach to disheartening the public to purchase healthier options ultimately depends on the people's will to follow the policy's goal. In addition, the Chinese government established mandatory health and physical education to decrease the obesity rate. To ensure that students of China receive the daily requirement of exercise, the Chinese government prescribed a mandatory physical education and exercise period where students undertake exercises from track to sport [16]. In order to establish a healthy habit of physical exercise, the Chinese government is preparing for the future to act as a catalyst for the future generation to better physical health.

3.4. US and Chinese government similarity

Although the US and the Chinese government differ in terms of the methods of promoting a healthy aging process, the overall aim of both governments was to influence the future generation to develop healthier habits. The US government introduced educational policies and programs that provide nutritional information regarding food intake as well as active exercises to prevent an unhealthy aging population in the future. The primary goal of the US government is to focus on the education and physical activities of the youth [17]. By guiding the youth in a healthier direction, the US government seeks to prevent chronic diseases in the future by making healthier choices and maintaining an active lifestyle. Similarly, the Chinese government introduced mandatory physical exercise and health education courses to prepare the youth for a healthier lifestyle in the future. Due to the predicted increase in obesity among children, the Chinese established the national policy of mandatory daily exercise targeted towards youth who are entering their primed age for physical development to participate in one hour of physical exercise each week. Through data analysis, mandatory physical activity policies will significantly improve the physical health of society [18]. Similar to the US government, the Chinese government's approach centers on the development and influence of the future generation. Both governments suggest that as the future aging population emerges, the positive influence of health education and physical exercise from an early age will prevent their likelihood of developing chronic diseases.

4. Conclusion

The clash in ideology between the US and Chinese government regarding different ways of relieving the concern highlight the core difference between collectivist and capitalistic cultures. As the aging population progresses through the thought and concern regarding the chronic disease, it is essential to promote a healthy environment for aging for the elderly. Due to the overwhelming economic pressure following retirement, many elders refuse to leave the workforce, which in terms causes an overall economic downturn. In addition, the aging population is more vulnerable to chronic diseases, such as heart disease, stroke, and cancer, due to the aging of the internal body systems; regular exercise and a healthy diet are essential for a healthy aging process and prevention against chronic diseases.

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