



Characteristics of functional ability and chronic disease condition among older patients in primary care in Taiwan

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Background/Problem/Objective

The population of older people is growing rapidly in Taiwan. The proportion of residents aged over 65 was 15% in 2020, estimated to be 20% in 2025. The birth rate for Taiwan in 2021 is 8.402 births per 1000 people, which is far lower than the growth of the older population. For tackling the challenge of demographic change, actions on promoting healthy ageing are urgently needed. Understanding the parameters regarding healthy ageing is important for strategy making.

Methods/Intervention

A pilot program was funded by the Health Promotion Administration (HPA), Ministry of Health and Welfare in Taiwan since 2018 aimed to implement comprehensive, functional-orientated care for older people in primary healthcare settings. The target population was the patients aged ≥ 65 years of the primary care clinics. Patients were evaluated and managed by primary healthcare team according to the “Guidance on person-centred assessment and pathways in primary care” proposed by World Health Organization.

Results

Table 1. Demographic data of 9,476 subjects in the study

	Male (n=3,892)	Female (n=5,584)	p value
Age group			0.0034
65-74	2,307 (59.3)	3,205 (57.4)	
75-84	1,255 (32.2)	1,954 (35.0)	
85-94	311 (8.0)	414 (7.4)	
95+	19 (0.5)	11 (0.2)	
Chronic disease			
DM	2,613 (67.1)	3,556 (63.7)	0.0005
HTN	2,645 (68.0)	3,669 (65.7)	0.0220
HL	2,028 (52.1)	3,051 (54.6)	0.0151
CKD	559 (14.4)	634 (11.4)	<.0001
Number of chronic diseases			0.0064
0	292 (7.5)	519 (9.3)	
1	1,011 (26.0)	1,439 (25.8)	
2	1,207 (31.0)	1,731 (31.0)	
3	1,108 (28.5)	1,571 (28.1)	
4	274 (7.0)	324 (5.8)	

Data shown with N(%).

DM, Diabetes Mellitus; HTN, Hypertension, HL, Hyperlipidemia; CKD, Chronic kidney disease.

Table 2. Results of 9,467 subjects who completed the ICOPE assessment.

	Male (n=3,892)	Female (n=5,584)	p value
Domains of ICOPE			
Cognitive decline	687 (17.7)	1,178 (21.1)	<.0001
Limited mobility	420 (10.8)	886 (15.9)	<.0001
Malnutrition	170 (4.4)	237 (4.2)	0.7702
Visual impairment	659 (16.9)	982 (17.6)	0.4080
Hearing loss	300 (7.7)	321 (5.7)	0.0001
Depressive symptoms	138 (3.5)	286 (5.1)	0.0003
Number of abnormal domains			<.0001
0	2,223 (57.1)	2,905 (52.0)	
1	1,160 (29.8)	1,826 (32.7)	
2	358 (9.2)	577 (10.3)	
3	113 (2.9)	204 (3.7)	
4	33 (0.8)	62 (1.1)	
5	3 (0.1)	10 (0.2)	
6	2 (0.1)	0	
Results of ICOPE assessment			<.0001
Abnormal	1,669 (42.9)	2,679 (48.0)	

Data shown with N(%).

ICOPE, Integrated Care for Older People.

Conclusions

Most of the older people had multi-morbidities. Age is a significant risk factor for the impairment of cognition, physical and sensory function. There had gender difference for the impairment of intrinsic capacity.