

Older People Need Support

Jessica Sifuentes

BEFORE YOU READ: Look up *ventricular fibrillation*. Practice pronouncing it. Notice the words *malnourished*, *dehydrated*, and *geriatric*. Try to figure out what they mean from the context.

My Patient Was Waiting to Die

Many older adults have spent their whole lives taking care of themselves and their families. As they get older, the opposite might be true. They might need someone to take care of them. This is harder than we can imagine. Older people sometimes feel like they no longer are an authority in their own life.

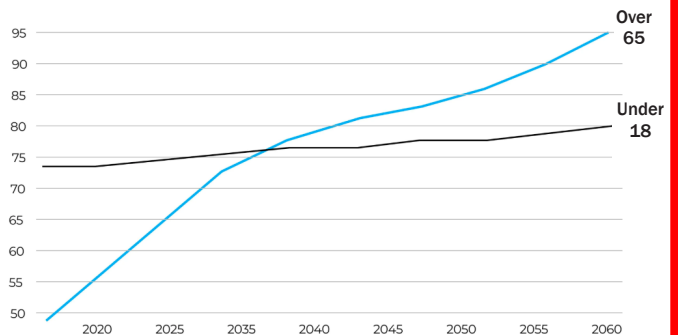
I worked as a *geriatric* care provider in the United States. The patient that I took care of was 85 years old. When I started working with him, he was in very bad condition physically and mentally. He had *ventricular fibrillation*, a heart condition that made him have a low heart rate. Also, he was malnourished and dehydrated because he did not want to eat or drink. He did not like to take a shower or get out of bed. As a consequence, he slept most of the time, and he was getting very weak. He told me that he had done enough in his life, and he was waiting to die.

His Family Did Not Know How to Care for Him

His family thought they were being compassionate. They did not encourage him to get out of bed and do things. But the reality was that his family did not have the knowledge to take care of him. It was not because they did not love him. It's just that no one educated them.

I understood why he did not want to get out of bed. He was depressed about his limitations. He was afraid of falling and of feeling more pain. He felt he was no longer "useful." I kept working with him. I tried to teach him and his family that he could learn a new lifestyle. I explained that it might be hard and frustrating but not impossible.

U.S. Population Prediction for Seniors & Children
Population values in millions



Write a true statement about the information in the chart.
Source: <https://www.softeq.com/blog/iot-for-seniors-how-technology-improves-quality-of-life-for-the-elderly>

It took four months, and finally everyone started to understand. He started to eat more, so he had more energy. He started being able to do basic things. Of course, he did them slowly and with help. The family understood the importance of helping him no matter how difficult it was.

Educate and Advocate

As people get older, they might become more disabled. Our society sometimes rejects older people. We don't give them the resources they need to live fully. We should educate people and advocate for older people. Their life should be easy and comfortable in their golden age.

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