

Kuwait health services for older adults: current situation and aspiration

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ABSTRACT

Kuwait has a population of 4,437,590. Including 1,351,955 Kuwaitis and around 3million non-Kuwaitis. Kuwaitis older adults ,65 years and above, representing 3.8% of total Kuwaitis. The percentage of older Kuwaitis is increasing over the past years were in 1970 was 2.6% and expected to become 25% of total Kuwaiti population at 2050.

This situation demands a comprehensive response from the health care system to challenges relevant to caring for this age group and working to meet their needs.

Kuwait has committed itself to develop strategies, plans and programs that addresses the needs of older adults with a view to providing integrated health care. Shown by having His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Prize for Research in Health Care for the Elderly and in Health Promotion under the umbrella of World Health Organization as well as including older adults care program among the 7 pillars of Kuwait National Development Plan 2035. Moreover, issuing the National Health Strategy for the Care of the older adults in the State of Kuwait and the Attached Executive Plan (2016-2020). And establishing Geriatric Health Services Administration in Ministry of Health with main terms of reference including Development of health services for the elderly including physical, psychological, social services as well as implementing preventive, rehabilitative programs and home care. Along with development and implementation of awareness plans concerning aging and care of the

elderly with strengthening the role of the family and community in their care. The older adult's health services are provided in primary health care clinics with special 17 clinics for older adults distributed in many Kuwait cities.

There are 4 Kuwaiti laws that provide the legal rights for older adults including Law No. 18/2016 On social welfare for the elderly, Law No. 114/2014 on health insurance for retirees (AFIA), Law No 8/2010 on rights of persons with disabilities, Law no 61/1976 On social insurance and pension.

4 main challenges are facing the Readiness of the Health System for the care of older adults in Kuwait including the development of health services for the elderly, in accordance with the needs of the Kuwaiti society through infrastructure support , the provision of qualified and trained staff (multidisciplinary team), the introduction of new services to provide integrated health care at different levels of health service, whether preventive, acute, long-term or rehabilitating services and providing home care services through a mobile unit offering treatment services, prevention and treatment of emergency cases.