



“Celebrating Older Human Rights Champions” (World Senior Citizens Day Guest Comment)

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Respecting and caring for elders had always been an integral part of Indian culture. Average life expectancy in 1950's was 48 through the world, while in 2015, it had surged to 71.5 years. Hence the percentage of elderly people is on the rise owing to the availability of advanced medical care. However in this digital era of rapid pace, such values are on the decline, thus emphasizing the need to reiterate the idea in the form of dedicating a day to the elderly. Their valuable contributions to our communities create better places to live, in return they just expect a smile, a warm greeting and some love.

World Senior Citizen's day was first proclaimed on 14th of December in the year 1990, by the United Nations General Assembly, while it was celebrated for the first time on October 1, 1991. The day is acknowledged to raise awareness about the issues affecting older people, such as deterioration with age and abuse of elderly people. This day was created as a day to support, honour and show appreciation to our seniors and to recognise their achievements.

Growing older does not diminish a person's inherent dignity and fundamental rights. The theme for 2018 is formulated accordingly – “**celebrating older human rights champions**”. The 2018 theme focusses on promoting the rights of older persons; raise the visibility of older people as participating members of society committed to improving the enjoyment of human rights in many areas of life and not just those that affect them immediately; reflect on progress and challenges in ensuring full and equal enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms by older persons; and engage broad audiences across the world and mobilize people for human rights at all stages of life.

Apart from the above aspects, as dental professionals, we can significantly contribute to the welfare of the elderly. Geriatric oral care commences by recognizing the oral health needs of the elderly. By rehabilitating their dentition, we can help them in consuming

nutritious diet. Their oral conditions may be a marker for underlying systemic diseases. Recognising them early and timely referral to a medical practitioner helps in reducing the morbidity due to the systemic disease. We also can recognise signs of elderly abuse when they present to us and alert the concerned authorities to ensure their safety. We can provide free health services to the elderly through camps or charity hospitals. Helping hands are better than praying lips, hence friends, lets commemorate this day by making a significant contribution to the well-being of the elderly in our own little way!!

I sincerely thank the editorial team for giving me this opportunity to share my views!!

REFERENCES

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