



# GROWING OLD IS NOT A DISEASE

Abalinx 22 October 2019 Peter Adamis

Dignity, respect and duty of care comes to mind when looking after the interests of the elderly. It is no wonder swathes of employees working in old age homes will be seeking new careers.

It is a thankless task, long hours, poor pay and conditions for many of those who work in this type of industry. The same goes for the nursing and reception staff in public hospitals. There are few nurses to monitor and take care for the patients. The ratio of one nurse to five patients appears to be the norm. What this means for the elderly patients whose needs are constant and needy; are long response waits.

How many have ever considered that positives rather than the negative aspects of looking after elderly parents. Is it always about how it affects one's self and the lifestyle one leads? Are the elderly too much to handle, not sufficient resources, time or money involved to look after ones elderly. I guess mankind believes that it has reached a level of maturity that it does not take into account the philosophy of caring and supporting the elderly. However in the defence of those who believe that the elderly should be housed in a facility that accommodates those at the end of life, incapacitated, dementia, and/or psychologically and physically challenged, there is some merit in extreme cases.

What is the solution and what can be done about this to increase the duty of care for patients. Money is not always the answer, training, awareness and education are best positioned to improve and enhance the duty of care. The paramedics are trained for many contingencies and in many cases are just as highly trained if not more in saving a person's life. I have seen firsthand the application of duty of care by the paramedics and I for one must say, was impressed by their professionalism.

The elderly need to be treated with dignity and respect paid to them. Old age is not a disease, they are not lepers but human beings worthy of our respect. They too roamed this earth as young lions, exploring, adventurous, risk taking, partying, getting married, children and working to make a living and get ahead in the world.

When they look at us, they see a reflection of themselves and wish that they could raise their arms just one more time, smile, laugh, eat, to drink and to make merry. Yes this and more. Now as age has taken a grip on their small, haggard body, each wrinkle being a reminder of one more year gone by, never to return. As stated above, what they need is dignity, respect, patience and understanding. We must look after the needs of the elderly as we would prefer to be looked after. Put aside negative feelings that seduce a person to throw the elderly into old age homes that are out of sight and out of mind.



**MORAL OF THE STORY:** Growing old is not a disease. The aged and elders in our community are not lepers but a reservoir of stories, tales of old, legends of a past era and wealth of life that money just cannot buy. Growing old is not a disease nor is it contagious as such the elderly should not be treated as lepers in their later years.

Cherish the time left allocated to them and bridge the gap of generations before that bridge is severed forever. That all from me. I guess this article is more of a personal one and not too hard to see through the thin veil of life. Take care, stay strong, be of good cheer, fight the good fight and never give up. Death will come to all of us one day.