



# HEALTH NEEDS OF OLDER PEOPLE

IN A SEMI-URBAN VILLAGE  
IN MALAYSIA

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# **HEALTH NEEDS OF OLDER PEOPLE IN A SEMI-URBAN VILLAGE IN MALAYSIA**

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# PREFACE

This book is based on a research study that assessed, from a nursing perspective, the health care needs of people aged 60 years and over that live in a village in Sarawak, Malaysia. This book's purpose is to share with others my experience of conducting health needs assessment among community-dwelling older people. Furthermore, the dearth of literature on ageing/older people from Sarawak propelled me to have this work published.

In Malaysia the vast majority of older people live in the community. As is typical of developing countries, the needs of the older people are provided for by the families, but with increasing urbanization the health and well-being of older people could be affected. Thus there is a need for assessment of the healthcare needs of this population. The assessment process needs to be a comprehensive conceptualization of community health issues, covering environmental, psychosocial, physiological and health-related behaviour domains.

Chapter 1 provides a demographic profile of older people, and an overview of the ageing population in Malaysia, and its implication for health care providers. It provides a discussion of issues associated with health and health promotion, needs and needs assessment and the role of public health nurses and community nurses in Sarawak

Chapter 2 examines the term "health assessment" and health assessment tools and it discusses the applicability of the latter in the local context. A review of the few Malaysian studies does show implications for the development of policy and health care programmes. Nursing studies identifying health needs of older people in the communities as well as studies of health needs of communities are examined for the conduct of health assessment.

Chapter 3 describes the process of the study, addressing the population and sample, ethical issues, design, application of the Problem Classification Scheme and the analysis of data. Chapter 4 provides a description of the problems identified among the older people, grouped under four domains namely environmental, psychosocial, physiological and health-related behaviour. With the ageing process, physiological functioning generally deteriorates and multiple health problems are quite common.

Implications for clinical practice and research are discussed in Chapter 5. A need for comprehensive health screening services for older people and homevisiting services are further explored. Older people are in need of education regarding their rights to health care, information concerning their health, along with alternative treatments and their respective consequences. The significant role provided by family in the care of older persons also illustrates the need to include them in any health care programme. Furthermore, health care workers could play a critical role in the promotion of health among older people. The book concludes that continued research in the area of aged care is essential for nursing to expand the profession's knowledge base.

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