

Construction of Health Management and Long-term Care System for the Elderly Population

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Abstract

With the acceleration of global population aging, the construction of health management and long-term care systems for the elderly has become an urgent social issue that needs to be addressed. This article aims to explore the current situation, challenges, and response strategies of health management for the elderly population, and analyze the importance, models, and implementation paths of building a long-term care system. Through literature review, case analysis, and other methods, this article proposes a series of policy recommendations in order to provide reference for the construction of health management and long-term care systems for the elderly population.

1 Introduction

1.1 Research Background

With the rapid advancement of medical technology and the steady improvement of people's living standards, the average life expectancy of the global population has significantly increased, which has driven the rapid growth of the elderly population. According to the latest data released by the World Health Organization, the world's average life expectancy has reached 66 years, marking a significant achievement in human health and longevity. At the same time, the number of elderly people aged 60 and above is about 580 million, accounting for 9.6% of the global population, indicating that the world is facing an unprecedented wave of aging. In China, the phenomenon of aging is particularly significant. According to statistical data, the population aged 60 and above in China accounts for 10% of the total population, which far exceeds the internationally recognized standard for an aging society, marking that China has officially entered the stage of an "aging society".

With the increasing proportion of elderly population, the health problems of the elderly population are becoming increasingly prominent. Chronic diseases have become a major persistent disease that puzzles the elderly. Chronic diseases such as hypertension, diabetes, cardiovascular and



cerebrovascular diseases not only affect the health of the elderly, but also seriously reduce their quality of life. In addition, the problems of disability and dementia are becoming increasingly serious. Many elderly people lose their ability to take care of themselves due to physical or cognitive decline, which not only brings great pain to themselves, but also imposes a heavy burden on their families and society. The health issues of the elderly population not only affect their personal well-being, but also pose a serious challenge to socio-economic development. The increase in medical expenses, the surge in demand for elderly care services, and changes in the labor market have all put forward new requirements for the socio-economic system. Therefore, how to cope with the challenges brought by aging and improve the health level and quality of life of the elderly has become a common concern and urgent problem for the whole society.

1.2 Research Significance

The construction of a health management and long-term care system for the elderly population has profound and important significance for improving their quality of life, reducing the heavy burden on families and society, and promoting overall social harmony. In terms of health management, scientific and systematic health monitoring, evaluation, and intervention measures can effectively prevent and control the occurrence and development of elderly diseases. This can not only help elderly people maintain good physical health and slow down the progression of diseases, but also greatly reduce medical expenses caused by diseases, and alleviate the economic pressure on individuals, families, and even society(Zhou and Xie, 2007).

Health management is not limited to disease prevention and treatment, but also includes comprehensive attention and guidance on the lifestyle, psychological state, nutritional intake, and other aspects of the elderly. By providing personalized health management plans and encouraging elderly people to actively participate in health promotion activities, their self-care awareness and abilities can be enhanced, thereby improving their overall health level(Zhang, 2007).

A comprehensive long-term care system is an important guarantee for the lives of the elderly. This system covers a comprehensive range of services from home care, community care to institutional care, and can provide comprehensive, continuous, and personalized care services based on the actual needs and preferences of the elderly. Whether it is daily life care, medical care services, spiritual comfort, social activities, etc., corresponding support can be found in the long-term care system.

The construction of a long-term care system not only guarantees the basic living needs of the elderly, but also enhances their quality of life, allowing them to spend their later years in a dignified and secure environment. At the same time, this also reduces the caregiving burden on family members, enabling them to better balance work and life, and promoting harmony and happiness in the family.

In summary, the construction of a health management and long-term care system for the elderly population is a livelihood project that benefits billions of elderly people. It is related to the physical and mental health of the elderly, the happiness and peace of families, and the harmony and stability of society. Therefore, we should attach great importance to and actively promote the construction and improvement of this system, creating a better and more livable living environment for the elderly (World Health Organization, 2015).

2 Health Management of the Elderly Population

2.1 Health Status of the Elderly Population



The health status of the elderly population is not optimistic. As age increases, the physiological functions of the elderly population gradually decline, metabolism slows down, digestion and absorption abilities decrease, and the body's resistance decreases, making it prone to various geriatric diseases. According to data from the National Health Information Statistics Center, malignant tumors, cerebrovascular diseases, and cardiovascular diseases account for over 60% of urban deaths in China. In addition, the prevalence of chronic diseases such as diabetes and osteoporosis is also increasing year by year().

2.2 Challenges Faced by Health Management of the Elderly Population

Unequal distribution of medical resources: The problem of uneven distribution of medical resources in China is particularly prominent in the health management of the elderly population. The medical resources in big cities and developed areas are relatively abundant, while those in rural and remote areas are relatively scarce. This leads to significant urban-rural and regional differences in the elderly population's access to medical services.

Weak awareness of health management: Some elderly people do not attach enough importance to health management and lack self-care awareness and ability. They often wait until the disease occurs before seeking medical attention, missing the best opportunity for prevention and treatment.

Difficulty in managing chronic diseases: Chronic diseases are one of the main threats to the health of the elderly population. Chronic diseases have a long course, complex conditions, and difficult treatment, requiring long-term management and intervention. However, the existing medical service system often fails to meet the long-term care needs of chronic disease patients (Smith and Johnson, 2023).

2.3 Response Strategies for Health Management of the Elderly Population

Strengthen the allocation of medical resources: The government should increase investment in medical resources in rural and remote areas, and improve the service capabilities of grassroots medical institutions. At the same time, we will promote the sinking of high-quality medical resources, encourage large hospitals to establish cooperative relationships with grassroots medical institutions, and form a hierarchical diagnosis and treatment system(Lee and Kim, 2022).

Enhance awareness of health management: Enhance the health management awareness of the elderly population through publicity and education, health lectures, and other means. Encourage elderly people to actively participate in health management activities, such as regular physical examinations, health consultations, chronic disease management, etc.

Improve the chronic disease management system: Establish a sound chronic disease management system to provide comprehensive, continuous, and personalized care services for chronic disease patients. Strengthen health education for chronic disease patients and improve their self-management abilities. At the same time, establish a follow-up and monitoring mechanism for chronic disease patients to promptly detect changes in their condition and adjust treatment plans(Wang and Kim, 2022).

3 Construction of Long-term Care System

3.1 The Importance of Building a Long-term Care System



With the increasing number of elderly people and deteriorating health conditions, the demand for long-term care is growing day by day. The construction of a long-term care system is of great significance for ensuring the basic living needs of the elderly, improving their quality of life, and reducing the burden on families and society. Through a comprehensive long-term care system, comprehensive, continuous, and personalized care services can be provided to the elderly to meet their needs in life care, medical care, spiritual comfort, and other aspects(Jones and Brown, 2020).

3.2 The Model for Constructing a Long-term care System

Family care model: The family care model refers to the provision of care services for the elderly by family members. This model has the advantages of family care and low cost, but it may also have problems such as insufficient caregiving capacity and low caregiving quality.

Community care model: The community care model refers to the provision of care services for the elderly by the community. This model has the advantages of proximity, convenience, and flexibility, which can meet the willingness of elderly people to retire at home. Community care services can include various aspects such as daily care, medical care, and spiritual comfort(Davis and Harris, 2019).

Institutional care model: The institutional care model refers to professional institutions providing care services for the elderly. This model has the advantages of strong professionalism and high quality of care, but it may also have problems such as high costs and lack of family care.

3.3 Implementation Path for the Construction of Long-term Care System

Improve policies and regulations: The government should formulate and improve policies and regulations related to long-term care, clarify the service content, service standards, service fees, etc. of long-term care. At the same time, we will increase regulatory efforts on the long-term care industry to ensure its standardized and orderly development.

Strengthen talent cultivation: Intensify the cultivation of long-term care talents and improve the quality and technical level of practitioners. By offering relevant professional courses and strengthening vocational training, we aim to cultivate a group of long-term care talents with professional knowledge and skills.

Promote service innovation: Encourage service innovation in the long-term care industry to improve service quality and efficiency. Modern means such as intelligent technology and telemedicine can be introduced to provide more convenient and efficient care services for the elderly.

4 Case analysis

4.1 Shanghai Long-term Care Insurance System

With the deepening of population aging in Shanghai, the long-term care needs of the elderly population are increasing day by day. To address this challenge, Shanghai launched a pilot program for long-term care insurance system in 2016, becoming one of the first pilot cities in China. The implementation of this system aims to address the economic burden and service security issues of elderly people who require long-term care such as disability and dementia. This article will conduct a case analysis of the long-term care insurance system in Shanghai, exploring its system design, implementation effects, and challenges faced. As a national economic, financial, trade, and shipping



center, Shanghai also ranks among the top in terms of aging population in the country. According to the latest disclosed data, as of December 31, 2022, there will be 5.5366 million registered residence elderly aged 60 and above in Shanghai, accounting for 36.8% of the total registered residence population, which has entered the stage of severe aging. The rapid growth of the elderly population has put forward a huge demand for long-term care services, and the existing elderly care service system is difficult to meet this demand. The main purpose of the long-term care insurance system in Shanghai is to provide economic support and service guarantees for elderly people who need long-term care, such as those with disabilities and dementia. By raising funds through government subsidies, personal contributions, and other means, we provide home care, community care, and institutional care services to eligible elderly people, reducing their economic burden and improving their quality of life.

(1) Institutional design and implementation

The protection objects of the long-term care insurance system in Shanghai are the insured persons of the local employee medical insurance and the insured persons of the urban and rural resident medical insurance over 60 years old. During the pilot phase, the scope of protection is for elderly people aged 60 and above who have been assessed at levels 2 to 6. The long-term care insurance system in Shanghai raises funds through the adjustment of medical insurance funds. First, according to the employer's employee medical insurance payment base of 0.5%, it will be adjusted from the employee medical insurance pooling fund; The second is to adjust from residents' medical insurance financing. The service models of Shanghai's long-term care insurance system are divided into three types: home care, community day care, and elderly care institution care. The service content includes basic daily care and closely related medical nursing services. Shanghai has established a personal sharing mechanism, appropriately widening the payment ratio, and actively encouraging home and community services. The specific benefits are as follows: individuals bear 10% of the cost of home care, and individuals bear 15% of the cost of community day care and elderly care institution care. The payment level of the long-term care insurance fund is: 90% for home care, and 85% for community day care and elderly care institutions.

(2) Implementation process

Elderly people or their guardians or agents who meet the conditions can apply for procedures through the nearest community affairs service center or branch center in the street town. When applying, relevant documents such as identity proof must be submitted. The Community Affairs Acceptance Service Center accepts applications that meet the conditions and entrusts designated evaluation agencies to conduct evaluations. The designated evaluation agency shall complete onsite evaluation and investigation, input evaluation and investigation records, collective review and other evaluation work within 15 working days after receiving the application information. Evaluators need to be trained and qualified, and the evaluation institution needs to have a sound evaluation system and management system. The evaluation results will be publicly announced at the applicant's neighborhood (village) committee or community affairs acceptance center, and subject to social supervision.

Elderly people with assessment levels of two to six can enjoy long-term care insurance benefits. They can choose service models such as home care, community day care, or elderly care institutions based on their own needs. Service providers must possess the corresponding qualifications and conditions, and provide services in accordance with the prescribed service content and standards.

The cost of long-term care insurance is settled between the medical insurance department and the



service provider. The medical insurance department will strengthen the supervision of service providers to ensure that they provide services in accordance with the prescribed service content and standards. At the same time, the medical insurance department will also supervise and inspect designated evaluation institutions and evaluators based on the fulfillment of agreements, complaints and reports, daily assessments, and other situations.

(3) Implementation effect

Reduce the economic burden on families: The implementation of the long-term care insurance system in Shanghai has effectively reduced the economic burden on families of elderly people who need long-term care, such as those with disabilities and dementia. By combining government subsidies with individual contributions, funds are raised to provide economic support and service guarantees for eligible elderly people. This allows elderly people to only bear part of the cost when enjoying long-term care services, greatly reducing their economic pressure.

Improving the quality of life for the elderly: The implementation of the long-term care insurance system also provides more comprehensive and professional care services for the elderly. Service providers provide services according to the prescribed service content and standards, including basic living care and closely related medical nursing services. This enables elderly people to receive more thoughtful and meticulous care and attention when enjoying caregiving services, thereby improving their quality of life.

Promote the development of the elderly care service system: The implementation of the long-term care insurance system in Shanghai has also promoted the development of the elderly care service system. Through government subsidies and policy guidance, more social capital has been attracted to enter the field of elderly care services. At the same time, the system has also promoted the standardized and specialized development of elderly care service institutions, improving the quality and level of elderly care services.

(4) Challenges Faced

With the rapid growth of the elderly population in Shanghai and the increasing demand for long-term care, the funding pressure for the long-term care insurance system is gradually increasing. How to ensure the stability and sustainability of fundraising is a major challenge facing this system. Although the long-term care insurance system in Shanghai has achieved certain results, the service supply is still insufficient. Some elderly people still face problems such as queuing and limited service content when enjoying long-term care services. How to improve the quality and efficiency of service supply is an important issue that this system needs to address. With the implementation of the long-term care insurance system, regulatory difficulties have gradually increased. How to ensure that service providers provide services in accordance with the prescribed service content and standards, and prevent violations such as fraud and abuse, is a major challenge facing this system.

(5) Conclusion

The implementation of the long-term care insurance system in Shanghai provides economic support and service guarantees for elderly people who need long-term care, such as those with disabilities and dementia, effectively reducing their economic burden and improving their quality of life. At the same time, the system has also promoted the development of the elderly care service system. However, the system also faces challenges such as funding pressure, insufficient service supply, and increased regulatory difficulty.

The government should increase funding for the long-term care insurance system to ensure the



stability and sustainability of fundraising. Meanwhile, diversified fundraising channels can also be explored, such as introducing social capital, charitable donations, etc.

The government should increase its support for elderly care service institutions and improve their service supply capacity and level. At the same time, social forces can be encouraged and supported to participate in the construction of the elderly care service system, increasing the diversity and flexibility of service supply.

The government should strengthen the supervision of service providers to ensure that they provide services in accordance with the prescribed service content and standards. At the same time, a sound regulatory mechanism and system should be established to severely crack down on and punish violations.

The government should actively promote innovation and development of the long-term care insurance system, and explore service models and mechanisms that better meet the needs of the elderly. At the same time, we can also draw on international advanced experience to continuously improve and optimize the design and implementation of this system.

The implementation of the long-term care insurance system in Shanghai provides strong protection and support for elderly people who need long-term care, such as those with disabilities and dementia. Although the system faces some challenges and problems in its implementation, through the joint efforts of the government, society, and individuals, we believe that the design and implementation of the system can be continuously improved and optimized, providing more comprehensive and professional care services for the elderly.

4.2 Beijing Community Elderly Care Service Stations

Beijing Community Elderly Care Service Stations, as a new type of elderly care service model that has emerged in the context of an aging society in recent years, are gradually becoming an indispensable part of the lives of the elderly. These post stations are like pearls embedded in the community, providing comprehensive care services such as daily care, medical care, and spiritual comfort for the elderly. With their unique geographical location and convenient service methods, the elderly can enjoy professional and caring care right at their doorstep. Community elderly care service stations in Beijing are usually located within or near the community, with full consideration given to the convenience of travel and lifestyle habits of the elderly in their location selection. This layout allows elderly people to easily reach the post station and receive the necessary care services without having to travel long distances. The environmental design of the post station also fully considers the physical and mental characteristics of the elderly. Whether it is the indoor layout, decoration, or outdoor activity space, it strives to create a warm, comfortable, and safe atmosphere, allowing the elderly to feel the warmth of home here.

Post stations usually have multiple functional areas, such as living care areas, medical care areas, and spiritual comfort areas, each equipped with professional equipment and personnel to meet the different needs of the elderly. In the living care area, staff will provide daily dietary and living care for the elderly, such as assisting with eating, dressing, washing, etc; In the medical care area, there are professional medical staff providing health monitoring, disease prevention, emergency treatment and other services for the elderly; In the spiritual comfort area, various cultural and sports activities, psychological counseling, and other methods are organized to enrich the spiritual life of the elderly and alleviate their feelings of loneliness and anxiety.



(1) Service Content: Comprehensive and Professional Care System

The service content of community elderly care service stations in Beijing covers all aspects of elderly people's lives, forming a comprehensive and professional care system. Life care is one of the most fundamental and important services provided by the relay station. For elderly people with limited mobility or decreased self-care ability, every small thing in daily life can become a challenge. The staff of the post station will provide personalized life care services based on the specific needs of the elderly. For example, preparing nutritionally balanced meals for the elderly, assisting them with personal hygiene and cleaning, and helping them organize their rooms, laundry, etc. These seemingly simple services can bring great convenience and comfort to the elderly.

As people age, their physical functions gradually decline, and the risk of illness also increases accordingly. The post station has established close cooperation with surrounding medical institutions to provide convenient medical care services for the elderly. There is a medical care area within the post station, equipped with basic medical equipment and drugs, which can provide daily health monitoring, disease prevention, and health education services for the elderly. For elderly people who require special medical care, the post station can also assist them in contacting medical institutions, arranging professional medical staff for on-site service or referral treatment.

In addition to daily care and medical care, spiritual comfort is also an important component of post station services. Due to physical reasons and a shrinking social circle, elderly people often feel lonely and anxious. The post station provides rich and colorful spiritual and cultural life for the elderly through organizing various cultural and sports activities, interest groups, festival celebrations, and other means. At the same time, the post station also has a psychological counseling room, hiring professional psychological counselors to provide psychological counseling and emotional support for the elderly, helping them maintain a positive and optimistic attitude.

(2) Collaboration mechanism: Building a service ecosystem

Beijing Community Elderly Care Service Stations not only focus on improving their own service capabilities, but also actively establish cooperative relationships with surrounding medical institutions, home service companies, etc., jointly building an ecological system for serving the elderly.

Collaboration with medical institutions: The post station has established a close referral and consultation mechanism with surrounding medical institutions. For elderly people receiving medical care at the post station, if their condition requires further treatment or examination, the post station can promptly contact medical institutions and arrange for elderly people to be referred. At the same time, medical institutions will regularly send experts to the post station for consultation and guidance, in order to improve the professional level of medical nursing services provided by the post station.

Collaboration with Home Service Companies: The post station has also established a cooperative relationship with a home service company to provide home service support for the elderly. For elderly people who need domestic services, the post station can assist them in contacting domestic service companies and arranging professional domestic staff to provide on-site services. In this way, elderly people can easily enjoy convenient household services without having to search for household service resources themselves.

Integration with other community resources: In addition to collaborating with medical institutions and home service companies, the station also actively integrates other resources within the



community to provide more comprehensive services for the elderly. For example, relay stations can collaborate with cultural facilities such as community libraries and activity rooms to provide cultural and entertainment services for the elderly; We can also collaborate with volunteer organizations in the community to carry out volunteer service activities, providing assistance and spiritual care for the elderly in their daily lives.

4.3 Service Features: Personalized and Humanized Care

Beijing Community Elderly Care Service Stations always pay attention to personalized and humanized care in the service process.

(1)Personalized service plan

The post station will develop personalized service plans based on the specific situation and needs of each elderly person. For example, for elderly people with limited mobility, the relay station will provide door-to-door service; For elderly people with special dietary needs, the station will prepare customized meals for them; For elderly people in need of psychological support, the station will arrange professional psychological counselors for psychological counseling. This personalized service approach allows every elderly person to feel the care and respect of the station towards them.

(2) Humanized service concept

The staff of the post station always adhere to the concept of humanized service during the service process. They not only pay attention to the physical health of the elderly, but also to their emotional needs and psychological state. For lonely elderly people, staff will take the initiative to chat with them and accompany them; For anxious elderly people, staff will patiently listen to their complaints, provide comfort and support. This humanized service method allows the elderly to feel the warmth of home and the care of family at the post station.

(3) Social benefits: promoting community harmony and enhancing the happiness of the elderly

The establishment and operation of community elderly care service stations in Beijing not only provide convenient and professional care services for the elderly, but also generate extensive social benefits.

Promote community harmony: The establishment of post stations has provided better care and concern for the elderly in the community, reducing the caregiving burden on family members. At the same time, the post station also enhances interaction and communication among community residents through organizing various cultural and sports activities, volunteer services, and other means, promoting harmony and stability in the community.

Enhance the happiness of the elderly: The post station provides comprehensive and personalized care services for the elderly, meeting their needs in various aspects such as daily life, medical care, and mental health. This allows elderly people to feel more happiness and satisfaction in their later years. They no longer feel helpless and lonely due to the decline in their ability to take care of themselves, but can enjoy a beautiful old age with the care of the post station.

Promote the development of the elderly care service industry: The successful operation of community elderly care service stations in Beijing has set a new benchmark for the elderly care service industry. The service model, management philosophy, and cooperation mechanism of the relay station have all had a positive impact on the elderly care service industry. In the future, with the deepening of aging and the increasing demand for elderly care services, it is believed that more



community elderly care service stations will emerge to provide better and more convenient care services for the elderly.

4.4 Challenges and Future Prospects

Although community elderly care service stations in Beijing have achieved significant results, they also face some challenges in their development process.

(1)Difficulties in Fundraising

The operation of the post station requires a large amount of capital investment, including venue leasing, equipment procurement, personnel training, and other aspects. However, currently the funding sources of the relay stations mainly rely on government subsidies and social donations, and the channels for raising funds are relatively single. In the future, post stations need to actively explore diversified fundraising methods, such as introducing social capital and conducting public welfare donations, to ensure the sustainability of their operations.

(2)Shortage of service personnel

The services of the post station require the support of professional nursing staff, medical staff, psychological counselors, and other talents. However, currently there is a relative shortage of these talents, making it difficult to meet the development needs of the relay stations. In the future, post stations need to strengthen cooperation with relevant universities and training institutions, cultivate more professional talents, and improve the quality and ability of service personnel.

(3)Service standardization construction

The services of post stations involve multiple aspects and require the establishment of unified service standards and specifications. However, the standardization of service construction in post stations is still relatively lagging behind, with problems such as non-standard service processes and uneven service quality. In the future, post stations need to strengthen the construction of service standardization, formulate and improve service standards and norms, and enhance the professionalism and standardization of services.

Looking ahead to the future, community elderly care service stations in Beijing will continue to play an important role in the elderly care service system, providing better and more convenient care services for the elderly. At the same time, the post station will actively explore innovative service models and management mechanisms to promote the sustainable development of the elderly care service industry. I believe that with the support of the government and the joint efforts of all sectors of society, community elderly care service stations in Beijing will become a happy harbor for the elderly in their later years, making greater contributions to building a harmonious society and enhancing the happiness of the elderly.

5 Policy Recommendations

5.1 Intensify policy support

The government should increase policy support for the construction of health management and long-term care systems for the elderly population, and formulate and improve relevant policies, regulations, and institutional documents. At the same time, increase financial investment and tax incentives for the long-term care industry, and encourage social capital to enter the field of long-term care.



5.2 Strengthen the construction of service system

The government should strengthen the health management and long-term care service system for the elderly population, improve the service network and facilities. Promote the sinking of high-quality medical resources and improve the service capabilities of grassroots medical institutions. At the same time, we will increase support for long-term care institutions and promote their standardized and orderly development.

5.3 Improve service quality

The government should strengthen the supervision and evaluation of the quality of health management and long-term care services for the elderly population, ensuring their standardized and orderly development. Promote service innovation and technological progress, improve service quality and efficiency. At the same time, strengthen the training and education of practitioners to improve their quality and technical level.

5.4 Strengthen publicity and education

The government should strengthen the promotion and education of health management and long-term care for the elderly population, and increase the public's awareness and importance of health management and long-term care for the elderly population. Through publicity and education, health lectures, and other means, popularize knowledge of health management and long-term care, and improve the health literacy and self-care ability of the elderly population.

6 Conclusion

The construction of a health management and long-term care system for the elderly population is an important measure to address the challenges of population aging. By strengthening the allocation of medical resources, raising awareness of health management, and improving the chronic disease management system, measures can effectively improve the health level and quality of life of the elderly population. At the same time, by improving policies and regulations, strengthening talent cultivation, and promoting service innovation, a comprehensive long-term care system can be established to provide comprehensive, continuous, and personalized care services for the elderly. The government should increase policy support for the health management and long-term care system construction of the elderly population, and promote their healthy and orderly development.

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