
BOOK REVIEW

Home Health Care for Geriatrics: Challenges, Experiences and Wellness, Ramandeep Bawa and A. K. Sinha, Concept Publishing Company Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 2025, ISBN: 978-93-6344-977-0, pp. 364, Price: Rs. 1400/-.

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The aforesaid book is a timely and significant contribution to the growing discourse on ageing, caregiving, and health systems in India. The book addresses an often overlooked yet increasingly critical dimension of healthcare—home-based care for older adults—by examining caregiving as a complex socio-medical and emotional practice rather than merely a technical service. In the context of India’s rapid demographic transition and the rising burden of chronic illness among the elderly, the book offers valuable insights for policymakers, practitioners, and researchers concerned with geriatric care and health systems strengthening.

Overview and Structure

The book is best described as an empirical and socio-anthropological study of home-based geriatric care in India. Drawing on caregiver narratives, patient experiences, and systematic fieldwork, the authors emphasise that quality of care is often judged by care recipients not only through clinical competence but also through emotional connection, continuity, communication, and trust. This focus on psychosocial dimensions distinguishes the book from conventional geriatric health literature, which tends to privilege biomedical outcomes over relational aspects of care.

Structured into eight chapters, the volume foregrounds the experiences of nurses, attendants, and family caregivers—the “unsung heroes” of home care—whose labour remains largely invisible despite being central

to the wellbeing of older adults. The authors develop an analytical framework that captures the multiple factors shaping caregiving experiences, including emotional stress, workload, workplace conditions, economic insecurity, and the quality of support received from families and agencies. This conceptual model is one of the book's key strengths, as it provides a useful lens for improving training, policy design, and service delivery in home-based care.

Chapter-Wise Synopsis

Chapter 1 situates geriatric home care within India's demographic and epidemiological transition. The authors note that the population aged 60 and above is increasing rapidly, accompanied by a high prevalence of chronic diseases and unmet healthcare needs. The chapter outlines barriers faced by older adults in accessing institutional healthcare and argues for the growing relevance of home-based services. It also traces the evolution of home health care globally and in India, defining the roles of nurses, personal care assistants, palliative care workers, and family caregivers. Practical guidelines for caregiver conduct are discussed alongside patient expectations, explained using Kano's Model of Patient Satisfaction. The chapter concludes by highlighting the need for supportive environments for both caregivers and care recipients.

Chapter 2 reviews existing literature on elderly health needs and home health care, with particular attention to the working conditions and stressors faced by nurses and personal care assistants. The authors introduce a conceptual model that identifies four interlinked dimensions—emotional, economic, physical, and social—that shape caregivers' wellbeing. These factors influence job satisfaction, financial security, quality of care, and caregiver burden, especially in contexts marked by excessive workload and limited institutional support.

Chapter 3 details the research methodology adopted in the study. Using a socio-medical perspective, the authors employ in-depth interviews with respondents selected through proportionate sampling to ensure representativeness across age and sex. The chapter clearly outlines the research design, sampling strategy, study area, data collection tools, and analytical methods, along with the study's aims, objectives, and research questions. This methodological transparency enhances the credibility and rigor of the findings.

Chapter 4 marks the beginning of the analytical discussion and focuses on the necessity and challenges of home-based care. It presents

a demographic profile of households, patients, and caregivers, followed by an analysis of caregivers' relationships with agencies, patients, and family members. The chapter also examines the problems encountered by caregivers and assesses caregiver burden using a standardised scale, linking it to broader social determinants.

Chapter 5 employs thematic content analysis to explore how caregivers perceive their roles and how caregiving affects their physical, mental, and social wellbeing. The findings reveal that caregivers' emotional states are shaped largely by their interactions with patients, family members, and agency supervisors. Feelings of appreciation, respect, and recognition emerge as critical to caregiver satisfaction, while low wages, job insecurity, irregular working hours, and lack of benefits contribute to frustration and stress. The chapter underscores the need for greater attention to caregivers' psychological needs to create supportive and dignified work environments.

Chapter 6 focuses on patient demographics and medical histories, highlighting the challenges faced by elderly individuals receiving care at home. The authors observe that most patients are cared for by family members—sons, daughters, spouses, and relatives—often supplemented by paid caregivers. The chapter points out that older adults in India remain disadvantaged compared to those in many other countries due to limited access to geriatric specialists, healthcare services, and insurance coverage.

Chapter 7 examines how elderly patients and their caregivers adapt their lifestyles to manage multiple illnesses. Drawing on twenty-eight case studies, the authors demonstrate that remaining in familiar home environments, supported by family relationships, significantly enhances patients' comfort and wellbeing. Home-based care allows for personalised relationships with nursing staff and closer family supervision, often contributing to faster recovery and improved quality of life.

Chapter 8 presents the summary and conclusions, calling on state and national organisations to recognise and address the needs of direct support workers in home and long-term care. The authors emphasise that respect, appreciation, and recognition of caregivers' full scope of work are essential for workforce retention. They highlight role ambiguity, inadequate wages, and lack of health benefits as major contributors to caregiver stress and attrition. The chapter advocates for ongoing public and policy engagement to ensure livable wages, healthcare benefits, and structured training programmes. It also

stresses the importance of strengthening models that integrate family caregivers, community resources, and healthcare professionals through capacity-building and curriculum development.

Strengths of the Book

One of the book's major strengths is its holistic approach to geriatric care. By foregrounding social, psychological, emotional, and relational dimensions, it presents a more realistic and humane account of ageing and caregiving than purely clinical models. The dual focus on both caregivers and patients provides a nuanced understanding of home-based care dynamics, making the book valuable for health systems researchers, social workers, gerontologists, and policymakers. Its grounding in the Indian context enhances its relevance for South Asia and other low- and middle-income settings facing similar demographic and infrastructural challenges. The interdisciplinary integration of medical, nursing, and socio-anthropological perspectives further strengthens its contribution to health systems research.

Limitations

The primary limitation of the book lies in its exclusive focus on home-based care. Institutional settings such as hospitals, nursing homes, and primary health centres receive comparatively less attention. While this does not detract from the book's core objectives, future research could extend the analysis to explore capacity gaps and linkages between home-based and institutional care within the broader health system.