

# GERIATRIC AND GERONTOLOGICAL NURSING: HISTORICAL EVOLUTION, CONTEMPORARY PRACTICE, CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS, AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS IN HEALTHY AGING CARE

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## Abstract

Population aging has emerged as one of the most important demographic transformations of the twenty-first century, fundamentally altering healthcare delivery, workforce requirements, and long-term care systems worldwide. As life expectancy increases and fertility rates decline, healthcare professionals are increasingly required to address the complex and multidimensional needs of older adults. Geriatric and gerontological nursing have consequently evolved into specialized disciplines that integrate biological, psychological, social, cultural, and environmental dimensions of aging. This review examines the historical development of geriatric and gerontological nursing, theoretical foundations of aging, epidemiological trends, and contemporary challenges associated with population aging. The review further explores how evolving concepts such as healthy aging, functional ability, person-centered care, and age-friendly health systems have transformed nursing practice. Evidence indicates that gerontological nursing is transitioning from a disease-oriented paradigm toward a holistic framework

emphasizing resilience, autonomy, quality of life, and maintenance of function. Understanding the historical evolution and conceptual foundations of the specialty is essential for addressing future healthcare demands associated with rapidly aging populations.

**Keywords:** geriatric nursing, gerontological nursing, healthy aging, population aging, frailty, older adults, healthy ageing, nursing science