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WHO launches digital app to improve care for older people

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The innovative interactive digital application known as WHO ICOPE



The World Health Organization (WHO) is launching a package of tools, including a digital application to help health and social workers provide better care for older people.

The innovative interactive digital application known as WHO ICOPE Handbook App provides practical guidance to address priority conditions including mobility limitations, malnutrition, vision and hearing loss, cognitive decline, depressive symptoms and social care and support. Used in conjunction with a package of tools including a new handbook, the app will accelerate training of health and social workers to better address the diverse needs of older people.

Dr Anshu Banerjee, director of the department of Maternal, new-born, child and adolescent health and ageing at WHO said, “It is essential that services for older people are included in universal health care packages. At the same time there needs to be good coordination between the health and social services to provide optimal care when needed. The new package of tools supports healthy ageing with a person-centred and coordinated model of care.”

The world’s population is ageing at a fast pace. By 2050 one in five people will be over 60. The number of aged over 80 is projected to triple from 143 million in 2019 to 426 million in 2050. While every older person is different physical and mental capacity tend to decline with increasing age.

Dr Islene Araujo de Carvalho, group lead on ageing and integrated care at WHO said, “Such innovation will enable older people to continue doing the things they value and prevent them from social isolation and care dependency. Intervening close to where older people live, with active participation of the community and older persons themselves, is essential for a personalized care plan.”

The Integrated Care for Older People package of tools is the result of two years of extensive consultations with leading experts and stakeholders including civil society representatives.

The 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals recognize that development will only be achievable if it is inclusive of people of all ages. Empowering older persons and enabling their full participation and social inclusion in good health are ways to reduce inequalities.