Invited Symposia “Preventive Rehabilitation: What does it mean?"

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Traditionally rehabilitation has been considered to be a phase that occurs after or alongside clinical medical care, and with the objective to recover lost function or prevent escalating damage.

The relevance of ageing with regard to the rehabilitation process has been given poor consideration until recently. The importance of understanding the demands of an ageing and progressively dependent population is now being increasingly recognised.

The concept of preventive rehabilitation is based on the vision of a continuous and personalised health care provision for the elderly. It is marked by the paradigm of sustained duration of life as outlined by the WHO Ageing and Life Course Program. In this model, we recognize two risk factors for dependency: lack of physical activity and disadvantages of personal living surroundings.

The goal of preventive rehabilitation is to maintain a person on the safe side of the disability threshold through interventions and preventive activities focused on maintaining personal autonomy. In this health care model, the basic ability to move is considered to be a valuable and indispensable therapeutic resource. The difference between recommendation and prescription is widely recognised. The latter involves doses and response. The prescription of a physical activity recognizes a dose-related effect, applicable to any person, but especially relevant for elderly patients.

Therefore, we wish to present: "Preventive Rehabilitation: What does it mean?"

Dr. David Galinsky from the University of Ben Gurion, Israel, will present an approach to the identification of the community risk groups. Dra. Sandra Matsudo, from the Physical Fitness Research Centre from Sao Caetano do Sul, (CELAFISCs) Brazil, will explain the initiatives of physical activity as a resource for preventive interventions in community health. She is one of the founders of the Agita Sao Paulo Program that inspired the WHO to assume the slogan of the World Health Day 2002 "Move for health". And finally, Dr. Gustavo Duque from the Mc Gill University, Canada, will talk about importance of strategies for fall-prevention among the elderly, as a focused and prevalent theme arising from individual clinic intervention.