Rural elderly people in Spain. Is two years a too short period to change their lives?

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Objectives: This paper presents some findings from a wide epidemiological study performed to get a "big picture" of the health status of the elderly in a Spanish rural area. Based on the evidence found, we expect to produce recommendations focused in the policy making process related with this group.

Methods: An epidemiological prospective study of a rural elderly cohort (n=165), which included 94.2% of the total (N=175). We performed a cross sectional study, dimensions such as Self Perceived Health Status (SPS), Prescriptions (P) and Quality of Life (QOL), among others, and a follow up evaluation after 24 months. Inclusion and exclusion criteria were defined and a structured questionnaire plus a Comprehensive Geriatric Assessment (CGA) was conducted. To evaluate QOL, we used an Assessment Semantic Differential (ASD) scale in order to judge a person’s feelings about his/her life conditions at the moment.

Results: The cross sectional study included 88 men (46.3%) and 76 women (53.7%) of a total of 165. Average age was 74.8±76.6 years. 159 (97%) were interviewed directly, 5 (3%) indirectly through familiars or caregivers. After 24 months of monitoring, our sample size was reduced to 134 individuals, which means a loss of 18.8%. The SPS shows statistical differences in 24 months, p=0.034; p=0.008; p=0.004. The number of prescriptions in the sample increased in significant values as well p=0.000; and finally QOL also showed statistical changes p=0.019. All of these differences are significant in terms of worsening life conditions.

Conclusions: We have collected valuable information to start discussions at different policy making levels. Some points to apply them can be: Community intervention programs should consider SPH as a valuable indicator. Health professionals should be alerted about the prescription numbers in terms of the adherence, end of treatment and side effects. QOL reveals personal satisfaction and hope, as well as lost and sadness. A comprehensive approach to elderly care should include sanitary professionals, province and local level authorities and the civil society in order to enhance wellness of this group.

I-3-2

What to do with the "old people"? New forms of loss of citizenship: Aging and social development.

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The aim of the paper is to present the issue of aging from a different perspective based on geriatrics or general medicine. The social aging is a pressing issue on the agenda of the current governance and impacting most severely on poor or underdeveloped countries. The importance of this perspective, complementary to those related to health, is of fundamental importance as the basis for the implementation of public policies that address this phenomenon effectively.

In the development of the paper will present the results of a program implemented by the City of Buenos Aires (Argentina) to explore the possibilities and prospects opening up a comprehensive policy approach to aging.