PROSPECTS FOR IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF SERVICES FOR OLDER PEOPLE

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Abstract: *the rapid growth of the older population has become one of the most important socio-economic challenges for modern societies. Improving the quality of services for older people requires not only the expansion of medical and social care, but also the development of integrated, person-centred, accessible and sustainable service systems. This article examines the prospects for improving the quality of services for older people by focusing on institutional coordination, digital transformation, community-based support, human resource development and quality assessment mechanisms. The methodological basis of the study includes comparative analysis, systematic approach and synthesis of international experience. The results show that the quality of elderly care services depends on the integration of health, social, psychological, rehabilitation and household support services. The study argues that future development should be based on active ageing, preventive care, digital inclusion, family and community participation, and evidence-based quality indicators. The article concludes that improving services for older people is not only a social protection task, but also an important factor in ensuring human capital development, social stability and inclusive economic growth.*

Keywords: *older people, elderly care, service quality, active ageing, integrated care, social services, digital inclusion, quality assessment.*

Аннотация: *быстрый рост численности пожилого населения становится одной из важнейших социально-экономических задач современного общества. Повышение качества услуг для пожилых людей*

требует не только расширения медицинской и социальной помощи, но и формирования интегрированной, ориентированной на человека, доступной и устойчивой системы обслуживания. В статье рассматриваются перспективы повышения качества услуг для пожилых людей на основе институциональной координации, цифровой трансформации, развития услуг на уровне местного сообщества, подготовки кадров и внедрения механизмов оценки качества. Методологическую основу исследования составляют сравнительный анализ, системный подход и обобщение международного опыта. Результаты показывают, что качество услуг для пожилых людей зависит от интеграции медицинских, социальных, психологических, реабилитационных и бытовых услуг. Обосновано, что дальнейшее развитие данной сферы должно опираться на принципы активного старения, профилактического ухода, цифровой инклюзии, участия семьи и местного сообщества, а также на систему научно обоснованных показателей качества. В статье сделан вывод о том, что повышение качества услуг для пожилых людей является не только задачей социальной защиты, но и важным фактором развития человеческого капитала, социальной стабильности и инклюзивного экономического роста.

Ключевые слова: *пожилые люди, уход за пожилыми, качество услуг, активное старение, интегрированный уход, социальные услуги, цифровая инклюзия, оценка качества.*

Introduction

Population ageing is increasingly becoming a decisive factor influencing social policy, health care systems, labour markets and the structure of public services. According to the World Health Organization, older age is commonly associated with multiple health conditions such as hearing loss, cataracts,

osteoarthritis, diabetes, depression and dementia, which often occur simultaneously and increase the demand for coordinated care. At the same time, the United Nations emphasizes that the global population is ageing rapidly, and the share of people aged 65 and over is expected to rise significantly in the coming decades.

In this context, the quality of services for older people becomes a multidimensional issue. It cannot be limited only to medical treatment or pension support. Older people need a complex system of services that includes health care, social assistance, rehabilitation, psychological support, digital services, household assistance, cultural participation and opportunities for active ageing. Therefore, improving the quality of services for older people is directly connected with the development of an inclusive, human-centred and socially responsible economy.

The relevance of the topic is also determined by the fact that traditional forms of elderly care are no longer sufficient to meet the growing and changing needs of older people. The World Health Organization's Integrated Care for Older People approach stresses the importance of reorienting health and social services towards more person-centred and coordinated care, with a focus on maintaining intrinsic capacity and functional ability in older age. This means that future elderly care systems should move from fragmented assistance to integrated service models.

The aim of this article is to examine the prospects for improving the quality of services for older people and to identify priority directions for developing an effective, accessible and sustainable system of elderly care.

The research objectives are as follows:

1. To analyse the socio-economic importance of improving services for older people.

2. To identify the main quality dimensions of elderly care services.

3. To study international approaches to integrated and person-centred elderly care.

4. To propose priority directions for improving the quality of services for older people.

Methods

The methodological basis of the study consists of a systematic approach, comparative analysis, logical generalization and synthesis of international experience. The systematic approach was used to examine elderly care services as an interconnected set of health, social, economic, psychological and institutional components.

Comparative analysis made it possible to study international approaches to ageing policy, especially the concepts of active ageing, healthy ageing and integrated care. The article also uses the principles of the World Health Organization's Decade of Healthy Ageing 2021–2030, which promotes long-term cooperation among governments, civil society, international organizations, professionals and older people themselves.

- accessibility of services for older people
- quality and continuity of care
- integration of medical and social services
- digital inclusion of older people
- professional training of service providers
- institutional coordination
- monitoring and evaluation of service quality

Fig.-1. The study focuses on the following analytical dimensions:

The research is conceptual and analytical in nature. It does not rely on primary survey data, but develops a scientific framework that can be used for future empirical research, policy analysis and dissertation-level investigation.

Results

The study shows that the quality of services for older people depends on several interrelated factors. First, service quality is determined by accessibility. Older people should have access to necessary services regardless of place of residence, income level, health status or digital literacy. Accessibility includes territorial accessibility, financial affordability, physical convenience and informational openness.

Second, the quality of services is strongly connected with integration. In many countries, services for older people are divided among different institutions: health care organizations, social protection bodies, local authorities, private service providers and non-governmental organizations. Such fragmentation often leads to duplication of functions, inefficient use of resources and difficulties for older people in receiving timely assistance. Therefore, integrated care is one of the most important prospects for improving elderly services.

Third, person-centred service delivery is a key condition for quality improvement. Older people are not a homogeneous group. Their needs differ depending on age, health condition, income, family support, living environment, employment status and social activity. For this reason, services should be adapted to individual needs rather than based on a single standard package.

Fourth, preventive and rehabilitation-oriented services should be strengthened. A modern elderly care system should not wait until older people become fully dependent. Instead, it should support healthy ageing, early detection of risks, prevention of chronic diseases, physical activity,

psychological well-being and independent living. The WHO has called for transformation of care and support systems for older people, especially because existing systems in many countries are not fully prepared for growing demand.

Fifth, digital technologies create new opportunities for improving service quality. Digital platforms, electronic health records, telemedicine, online consultations, mobile applications and remote monitoring systems can increase the speed, transparency and convenience of services. However, digitalization should not exclude older people with low digital literacy. Therefore, digital inclusion should become an essential part of elderly care policy.

Sixth, the quality of services depends on professional human resources. Care workers, nurses, social workers, psychologists and rehabilitation specialists should have special knowledge of gerontology, communication with older people, ethics of care, dementia support, palliative care and social work methods. Without qualified personnel, even well-designed service models cannot produce high-quality outcomes.

The results of the analysis allow us to identify the following priority directions for improving the quality of services for older people:

Table-1.

Directions for improving the quality of services for older people

Direction	Main content	Expected result
Integrated service model	Coordination of health, social, psychological and rehabilitation services	Continuity and efficiency of care
Community-based services	Development of local support centres and home-based assistance	Increased accessibility

Digital inclusion	Training older people to use digital public and social services	Reduction of digital inequality
Preventive care	Early diagnosis, health monitoring and active ageing programmes	Improved health outcomes
Human resource development	Training of geriatric and social care specialists	Higher professional quality
Quality assessment system	Use of indicators, feedback and monitoring tools	Evidence-based management

Thus, the improvement of elderly care services should be based on a transition from a passive assistance model to an active, integrated and preventive model.

Discussion

The prospects for improving the quality of services for older people should be considered in connection with broader socio-economic development. Ageing is often viewed only as a challenge for pension systems and health care budgets. However, this approach is limited. Older people also represent an important part of society's human capital. Many of them have professional experience, social knowledge, cultural memory and the ability to participate in mentoring, education, consulting, volunteering and small-scale economic activities.

For this reason, the concept of active ageing is of particular importance. It means creating conditions in which older people can maintain health, independence, dignity and participation in social life. The UN Decade of Healthy Ageing 2021–2030 emphasizes coordinated actions to improve the lives of older people, their families and communities. This approach suggests

that services for older people should not be limited to care after illness, but should include prevention, participation and empowerment.

One of the promising directions is the development of "Silver Activity Centres" or "Silver Co-working and Activity Centres". Such centres may combine social communication, digital literacy training, health promotion, psychological support, leisure activities, professional mentoring and small service opportunities. They can be especially useful for retired teachers, doctors, engineers, economists and other experienced professionals who want to remain socially and economically active.

Another important direction is the expansion of home-based and community-based services. Many older people prefer to live in their own homes and familiar communities as long as possible. Therefore, home care, mobile medical teams, household assistance, rehabilitation visits and neighbourhood-based support systems can improve both quality of life and cost efficiency. This approach also reduces excessive pressure on hospitals and residential care institutions.

The quality of elderly services should also be measured through a clear system of indicators. In practice, the following indicators may be used:

coverage rate of older people with social services;

average waiting time for receiving services;

satisfaction level of older people;

share of home-based services;

number of trained geriatric and social care specialists;

digital literacy level among older people;

share of older people participating in active ageing programmes;

health and functional ability outcomes;

complaint resolution rate;

cost-effectiveness of service delivery.

A composite quality index may also be developed to assess the overall quality of elderly services. For example:

$$EQI = w_1A + w_2Q + w_3I + w_4D + w_5S$$

Where:

EQI — Elderly Service Quality Index;

A — accessibility of services;

Q — professional quality of services;

I — integration of health and social care;

D — digital inclusion;

S — satisfaction of older people;

w_1, w_2, w_3, w_4, w_5 — weighting coefficients.

This index can be used to compare regions, monitor changes over time and evaluate the effectiveness of reforms in elderly care.

At the same time, improving the quality of services for older people requires stable financing. Public funding remains essential, but it can be supplemented by public-private partnerships, social entrepreneurship, non-governmental organizations and community initiatives. The main principle should be that financial mechanisms must not reduce accessibility for vulnerable older people.

Therefore, the future of elderly care depends on a balanced combination of institutional reforms, digital technologies, professional training, community participation and quality monitoring.

Conclusion

Improving the quality of services for older people is one of the most important priorities of modern social and economic policy. Population ageing increases the demand for health care, social support, rehabilitation, psychological assistance and household services. However, the main task is not

only to expand the number of services, but also to improve their quality, accessibility, integration and effectiveness.

The study shows that the most promising directions for improving elderly care services are the development of integrated care models, strengthening of community-based and home-based services, digital inclusion of older people, professional training of care workers, introduction of quality assessment indicators and promotion of active ageing.

The article concludes that a high-quality elderly care system should be person-centred, preventive, inclusive and evidence-based. Such a system can improve the quality of life of older people, reduce social isolation, support independent living and contribute to inclusive economic development. In this regard, services for older people should be viewed not merely as a social expenditure, but as an investment in human dignity, social stability and sustainable development.

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