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Editorial

## Caring for older people

Increased life expectancy is considered one of the greatest medical, social, and technological achievements in contemporary society. A 60-year-old Australian today, on average, is expected to have a further 25 years added to life, and globally, this trend has been observed in both developed and developing nations (WHO, 2022). However, this longevity also presents two important facets to ageing: (i) people living longer and healthier lives; or (ii) people living longer with chronic illness and disability. For example, there has been a significant reduction of mortality from chronic conditions such as type 2 diabetes (Magliano et al., 2022), resulting in more older people managing and living with this chronic condition up into their 80s–90s.

From a sociocultural perspective, ageing parents, spouses, and partners who serve as main caregivers of ageing individuals living with cognitive impairment and intellectual disabilities encounter a unique set of challenges concerning their own needs as well as the care needs of those they are caring for (Montayre, Montayre, & Thaggard, 2019). Moreover, increasing concerns are being raised among ageing individuals that have been marginalised in care; for example, those in LGBTQI communities, and or culturally diverse older adults and late-life immigrants (Neville, Clair, Montayre, Adams, & Larmer, 2018; Willis, Maegusuku-Hewett, Raithby, & Miles, 2016). Care becomes more complex for older people with increasing morbidity and higher use of health care and social services. While technological advances provide potential opportunities for innovative models of care, complexities with resources, ageism and workforce issues remain an ongoing challenge. Older persons' mental health, workforce education, and health-promoting public health approaches to palliative care represent other key areas of increasing need (Abel, Kellehear, Mills, & Patel, 2021; Kellehear, 2015; Mills et al., 2021). Internationally, it is recognised across societies that populations are ageing with growing challenges to providing appropriate care across the lifespan. Thus, improving care for older people is a global priority.

This special issue focuses on all aspects involved with caring for older people in contemporary societies. While clinical aged care is often the synonymous of caring for older people (Bonus, Northall, Hatcher, & Montayre, 2022; Saunders et al., 2022), this collection also features research evidence with implications for social care policies (i.e., driving and dementia) (Ho et al., 2022; Rawson, Rigby, Ockerby, & Forbes, 2022), contrasting geographical settings in terms of promoting healthy ageing (rural vs urban) (Deng et al., 2022), and studies aimed at future-proofing the aged care workforce through education and addressing ageist stereotypes using

intergenerational approach (Gurung, Edwards, Romeo, & Craswell, 2022; Martyn, Wilkinson, & Zanella, 2022; Rayner et al., 2022).

This volume of work attests to the growing body of evidence from robust research with the fields of ageing and aged care nursing, both at and beyond the bedside. In addressing factors and strategies that holistically contribute to quality clinical care, as well as promoting healthy ageing, the contributions to this special issue demonstrate that the nursing profession is highly capable in terms of generating research evidence to improve the care provided to older people. However, it would be disheartening if such compelling evidence was not acted on or translated into real-world policies and practice change.

As editors of this special issue, we encourage readers and contributors to progress the translation of this work toward improving the care provided to older people. One potential step, in Australia, for example, would be taking action to progress and actively contribute to the implementation of the 148 recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aged Care. Internationally, exploring ways to progress cross-country and interdisciplinary collaborations to contribute toward the goals of the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing initiative would no-doubt prove impactful. As the largest health-care workforce, the nursing profession is well-positioned to advocate for older peoples' right to quality and dignified care—to lead the way in improving care for older people.

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