

## Prevention in Residential and Nursing Homes: A New Mission for the Future

Workshop organized with the support of  
The Office for Science and Technology of the Embassy of France in the United States  
Gérontopôle of Toulouse, December 2, 2015

### Rationale of the Workshop

Geriatric medicine was created to take care of older adults with co-morbidities and loss of autonomy. Presently the vast majority of geriatric forces are dedicated for the care of older adults with severe disabilities often at a stage that is too late to intervene to reverse the functional losses. Geriatric medicine must of course serve the most vulnerable older adults but also move to a much earlier stage to be more effective. Other medical disciplines have moved their focus from severe, late stages to earlier stages of diseases and losses, (eg cardiology, oncology). Two important pathways drive functional decline and disabilities with advancing age: loss of mobility and loss of cognitive function. Geriatric medicine faces the huge challenge of maintaining function for as long as possible during aging. The number of severely dependent older adults is projected to rise from 350 million in 2010, to 488 million and 614 million in 2030 and 2050, respectively. Geriatric medicine needs adapt its practice in order to adequately counteract such a dramatic scenario.

### Prevention in Residential and Nursing Homes

Residential and nursing homes are often considered as a site where most of the residents are severely ill, and likely to die. However, they have specific strengths to become sites for prevention, help the community, change their image, and still complete their original missions.

Residential and nursing homes:

- Are widespread around the globe, being located across most countries
- Have a specialized staff in geriatrics, with good expertise and social and medical resources
- Have access to patients, family, and relatives of people already dependent as well as to people living in the community
- Have good integration with primary care
- They can provide enough space for physical and cognitive exercise and nutrition therapy and develop their expertise in the promotion of this multi-domain approach.

In sum, residential and nursing homes have the resources required and should, therefore, be integrated in initiatives developed for the prevention of age-related functional declines for their residents as well as for community-dwellers. In such a new social and medical role,

residential and nursing homes would contribute to the maintenance of optimal levels of, for example, visual and hearing ability, weight-control, cognitive and mobility function, and overall well-being.

By such new activities residential and nursing homes may contribute to societal growth by developing jobs and expanding the market for new technologies and products in the field of preventive geriatrics, including for older adults living in the community.

### **Objective of the Workshop**

To foster the debate on the role of residential and nursing homes in the development of a new healthcare model that emphasizes the importance of preventive geriatrics. Two main aspects will be debated:

1. The overall role of residential and nursing homes in preventive geriatrics, with a particular focus on how to implement preventive initiatives in these settings for the whole community, such as multi-domain interventions.
2. How to manage the care of new geriatric populations for the residential and nursing home settings, such as very old, multi-morbid and frail elderly who are not dependent in basic ADLs but who need nursing care, as well as geriatric populations having characteristics that render it difficult for the staff to provide appropriate care, such as residents with obesity.

### **Workshop Participants**

Key opinion leaders from Academy, Industry, Governmental Agencies coming from the EU and the USA, will debate on the potentialities and obstacles for the implementation of this new healthcare model that integrates residential and nursing homes in the prevention of functional decline.

### **Workshop Dissemination**

1. IAGG GARN (International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics' Global Aging research Network)
2. Perspective paper on "Residential and nursing homes and preventive geriatrics" to be published in a high-impact journal in the field of geriatrics.

