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A LONG WAY SINCE VIENNA INTERNATIONAL PLAN OF ACTION ON AGEING... 1ST OF OCTOBER, THE INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR OLDER PERSONS...

Dramatic change in demography and the situation of the older persons at the global level were highlighted in the Vienna International Plan of Action on Ageing in 1982. Twenty years after the Vienna act, in 2002, the Madrid International Plan of Action in Ageing was announced as the political declaration on the issue. Madrid International Plan enlarged the perspective of ageing with its focus on the prevention of age discrimination, abuse, violence, neglect in all aspect of life including health, work, etc. Both Plans guide almost all regional and national aging related programs for the United Nations (UN) partner countries (1).

United Nations also accepted 1st of October as the “International Day for Older Persons” with a specific theme for every year to increase the awareness of the global community. “Take a stand against ageism” was the theme of 2016 (2) chosen to be addressed which was also a major working title of the Madrid International Plan of Action in Ageing. Ageism is a type of discrimination and it should be avoided as it ends with almost 7.5 years earlier deaths as well as negative health influences increasing morbidity rates (2).

Turkish Geriatrics Society prepares and distributes public hearings on the selected topics of the International Day for Older Persons every year. This year, the global theme was introduced to the Turkish Community via web site of the Society (3).

Ageing related agenda also highlight the need(s) in different aged groups of the older people. As the life expectancy at birth increases, 85 years of older people also increase in number and the needs of this age group are different from the younger aged groups of 65-74, and 75-84. Functional capacity is expected to decrease in the oldest age group which limits the independent living in this age group compared with the younger individuals. New perspective should be improved with the collaborative work between health and other sectors to increase the capacity of older people for surviving independently even in the oldest ages (4).

There is a long way to achieve the goal of eliminating age discrimination globally. Fortunately, age friendly approach can be helpful in this regard (5). Age friendly theme is a public health approach giving priority to the inclusion of aged people in all aspects of life. Many indicators were developed to make this approach more applicable at the community level (6). To combat with aged discrimination, all types of inequalities should be avoided arising from social determinants of health.

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