

1. INTRODUCTION

The life span of the human population has increased all over the globe due to advancements in science and technology and improved health care delivery systems. India has made significant strides in various spheres in the last decade and has also shown increased interest in the healthcare sector. Since a majority of the Indian population is dependent on health care provided by Government centers, there has been an initiative to provide the best possible specialized care by the Government with the available resources. In-line with the trends in the world, the subject of geriatrics has been in focus in the Health and Family Welfare departments across India.

Elderly patients in need of surgical interventions like hernia, hydrocoele, hemorrhoids, malignancies, complications of vascular insufficiency etc, represent a unique challenge to health care professionals. Past modalities of treatment have been revisited and combined with concurrent research in the geriatric population, new and specialized treatment protocols / guidelines are being suggested for the elderly population.

The guidelines for management of some of the commonly observed surgical problems in elders are highlighted in a brief manner and algorithms have been provided for quick reference. The principles of General Surgery are the foundation on which the aims of geriatric care have been incorporated to provide specialised care for elderly. The focus has been to reduce hospital stay and bring elders to functional independence as soon as possible. In geriatric surgical practice, it is worthwhile to remember the old adage “all surgeons know how to operate, a good surgeon knows when to operate, but a great surgeon knows when not to operate”. This book consists of two sections, Section A deals with general considerations and section B with surgical guidelines and their management at the primary and secondary care level. As the title implies, these are only guidelines for some common surgical conditions and hence, comprehensive text books on general surgery have to be referred for a detailed study.