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Investigating Geriatric Mental Health Initiatives and Treatment Plans in the Windsor-Essex Region

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Investigating Geriatric Mental Health Initiatives and Treatment Plans in the Windsor-Essex Region

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According to Macleans, “in the year 2031 one in four Canadians will be over the age of 65.” These individuals makes up a sizeable chunk of the Canadian population, and this also sheds light on the resources we have to facilitate and be prepared for this drastic change. Although, the healthcare sector thrives in providing accessible healthcare for *physical* issues, mental health is not as successful. Research regarding geriatric mental health (i.e. individuals over the age of 60) is limited, particularly in the Windsor-Essex region. Geriatric patients are unable to access psychological and psychiatric treatment, solely due to stigma, lack of education, social support, due to geographical location (urban versus rural), limited resources, inaccessibility, lack of public awareness, as well as ageism. From the years 2013-2017, there have been strategies to target mental health in geriatrics, which provides evidence about the lack resources available for Geriatric patients - most of the resources being allocated towards the youth and middle-aged individuals (20 years and up). This quantitative study will explore the 2013-2017 strategies through a gap analysis, and then devise an action plan. The plan will consist of assessing Geriatric mental health scores on the Geriatric Depression Scale, and particular treatment options. Geriatric patients will be assessed before and after enrolling in a 6-month program. This program will consist of 1-on-1 sessions with a psychologist, followed by participation in community service activities (volunteering at the hospital gift shop, library, etc) (Greenberg, 2012). Participants will then be tested, via the Geriatric Depression Scale, when visiting their physician for a regular annual checkup (Greenberg, 2012). The goal, of this study, is to lead to greater accessibility for every patient, in the Windsor-Essex region, and expand knowledge on the rising cost of psychological services being offered in this area.