

Vol 2. Issue 10. October 2021

NEWSLETTER

This is a monthly diary giving updates on activities at Graceful Living and providing information on ageing 'gracefully' to help elders live a life with maximum ease



AGEING WITH DIGNITY AND GRACE

Tulsi Trust was established by the Chanrai family in 1975. Graceful Living (GL) is a programme of Tulsi Trust which came into existence out of a realization that in today's world the elderly deserve due care and respect.

Graceful Living is a provider of elder care services. It has a presence on social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube) to create awareness of elders needs. GL aims to become the best service provider in Mumbai.

COMPANIONSHIP

- Individual Interaction
- Counselling
- Creative Workshops
- Brain Stimulation Activities
- Specialised Care for Alzheimer's, Dementia, Parkinson's, through our Partners
- Regular Support Group Meetings
- Overcoming Loneliness

MEDICAL SERVICES

- Comprehensive Geriatric Assessment
- Depression Screening
- Vision/Hearing Tests
- Individual Nutrition/Diet Plan
- Review of Medications
- Preventive Care... Vaccinations and Medicines
- Home-based Physiotherapy

CURRENT ACTIVITIES OF GRACEFUL LIVING

With Ms Amruta: Companionship sessions continue. Eight sessions were conducted with our service user in Singapore who is very interested in singing, therefore the sessions were centered around singing old songs, learning new ones and singing *bhajans*. Mental stimulation activities involving counting, tables, mathematical calculations, language learning, and recognition of objects were taken up as part of the activities. Four sessions were conducted with our service user in Noida who is willing to learn something new each time. Focus of discussions was on research on successful ageing, neuroplasticity of the brain and advantages of ageing.

With Dr Prem & Dr Rajashree Lad: A meeting was held on 24 August on post-Covid care for the elderly. Dr Prem mentioned all precautions the elderly need to take during this period. Dr Rajashree Lad shared six exercises for recovery from Covid. She said that it was important to keep in mind the 4 Ps...priority, plan, pacing and positioning. Emphasis was on not allowing oneself to get tired physically by continuously working. The senior should take intermittent breaks to sustain energy.

With Story Mitr: The first paid program of *Gupshup* was conducted on 27 August. A fee of Rs 200 was charged per person. A total of 12 people attended the session. The attendees participated enthusiastically and part of the program included a quiz competition; Ms. Viju Chavhan, Ms. Leela Wankhede and Mr. Virendra Chitre were the winners of the quiz.

With Ms Rajashree Parab, Financial Coach: As part of our guest lectures, Graceful Living presented a Zoom talk on 28 August conducted by Ms Rajashree Parab, an ex-banker with 18 years of experience in banking and finance. A certified coach, she made a presentation on the subject while advising seniors on how to choose the appropriate mode of investment and thus invest wisely with the help of the PPP program: plan, process and product approach, a method to avert financial errors. Her motto: 'Be Happy & Rich'. A total of 50 seniors attended the session. This was followed by an interactive Q/A session.



WEBINAR

A Webinar was conducted by Graceful Living on 4 September in conjunction with Mr Mahinder Singh, MM-Activ Sci-Tech Communications Pvt Ltd. It was held after a huge gap but was in line with the earlier Webinar which was held on 6 March, 2021. Guest speakers were invited to speak on the subject of Dementia. The four people on the panel of speakers included Dr. Joy Desai, Director and Head, Department of Neurology, Jaslok Hospital; Ms. Vidya Shenoy, Secretary General, Alzheimer's Related Disorders Society of India; Ms. Shraddha Shah, Consultant Neuropsychologist, Jaslok Hospital and Dr. Prem. Topics: Difference between Dementia and Alzheimer's, prevention of Dementia, difficulties faced by seniors during Covid and tips for Dementia caregivers. The total number of registrations was 64; 44 people attended the program.



ITCHY BURNNEY EYES

**Dr Pheroze Patel**

MBBS, DOMS, MS-FRCS Ophthalmology
Ophthalmologist/Eye Surgeon

There has been a common complaint by patients since the last 18 months, reason being the lockdown and subsequent long periods of time at home. In the tropics we are very outdoor by nature and this has been restricted. Hence a lot of complaints of redness, burning, itching and sticky eyes have surfaced. Most important is to avoid touching and rubbing your eyes as these habits cause the spread of infection. If you need to, then splash some cold water on the face or place cotton soaked in cold water on your closed eyes as they do in the salon.

Off-the-shelf eye-drops like non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drops (Flurbiprofen or Ketorolac) can be used along with a lubricant eye drop – they are safe and can be effective, till you are able to check with your doctor. Remember that during July/August and February/March the pollen count is very high and allergies are frequent at such times. If the eyes are very red and yellow discharge is present then

see the eye doctor within 24 hours as this could be a conjunctivitis problem and could spread to family members. For office goers, an air-conditioning environment is an area of common complaint. If the eyes feel dry and area burning, AC is the cause. So do step out into the open environment for fresh air and if the discomfort persists, then use lubricant eye drops (Refresh Tears or Ecotears) and at night use lubricant gels (Genteal) which are freely available.

During these times children are at 'home school' and long hours at the computer result in a lot of stress and strain to the eyes with the same complaints. Two suggestions here include:

* Look away from the screen every 20 minutes into the blue skies or if in a closed room, cup your eyes with your hands but keep the eyes open underneath for a minute or two; this will relax the internal eye muscles and you will feel fresh again.

* Use regular face wash and lubricant eye drops during the day if you are on a long stretch on the computer.

The elderly folk seem to have a lot of complaints about watery eyes and this is due to home confinement, excessive mobile phone and computer usage. Increased use means a strain on the eyes. Please reduce the usage time as drops hardly help except the lubricants. Sometimes the tears drainage passage may be blocked and hence a visit to your local eye doctor would be justified.

The October heat is on and the mini winter, therefore the above advice will be of help. If you feel better, reduce the drops from 2-3 times to once a day or when you require them. These drops are safe and the bottles can be used for long periods as they contain modern preservatives. Keep them in a cool area at home or in the office.

HOW TO PRESERVE YOUR MEMORY



Dr Naganath Narasimhan Prem, MD, Geriatric Medicine
Consultant - Jaslok Hospital, Graceful Living

September 21 was World Alzheimer's Day and September, Alzheimer's awareness month. Memory loss is very significant as it can affect the quality of life of the older adult and also at the same time can lead to caregiver burden.

Tips to preserve memory:

Learning

The brain needs to be challenged always so keep learning. It can be a new language, acquiring new skills or solving puzzles. Building and preserving brain connections is an ongoing process, so make lifelong learning a priority.

Using all the senses

Challenging all your senses as you venture into the unfamiliar is important. For

example, try to guess the ingredients as you smell and taste a new dish. Give sculpting or ceramics a try, noticing the feel and smell of the materials you are using.

Having self-belief

It is a myth that with ageing there is always memory loss. If you believe you can improve and you translate that belief into practice, you have a better chance of keeping your mind sharp.

Memory aids

Take advantage of calendars and planners, maps, shopping lists, file folders, and address books to keep routine information accessible. Designate a place at home for your glasses, purse, keys, and other items

you use often. Remove clutter from your office or at home to minimize distractions so you can focus on new information that you want to remember.

Repetition

If you want to remember something, make sure you keep repeating it in your mind or write it down. It gives you that extra way of consolidating it.

Preserving your memory is a continuous process. Try to keep yourself well connected in your social network whether it's friends or family. Challenge your brain always and you will have better results in preserving your memory.



You've got to win in your mind
Before you win in your life.

- John Addison





GRACEFUL LIVING
LOVE LIFE LIBERTY

PSYCHOLOGICAL STRESS=GREYING OF HAIR

Legend has it that Marie Antoinette's hair turned grey overnight just before her beheading in 1791.

Though the legend is inaccurate -- hair that has already grown out of the follicle does not change colour -- a new study from researchers at Columbia University Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons is the first to offer quantitative evidence linking psychological stress to greying hair in people.

And while it may seem intuitive that stress can accelerate greying, the researchers were surprised to discover that hair colour can be restored when stress is eliminated, a finding that contrasts with a recent study in mice that suggested that stressed-induced grey hairs are permanent.

The study, published recently in *eLife*, has broader significance than confirming age-old speculation about the effects of stress on hair colour, says the study's senior author Martin Picard, PhD, associate professor of behavioural medicine (in psychiatry and neurology) at Columbia University Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons.

"Understanding the mechanisms that allow 'old' grey hairs to return to their 'young' pigmented states could yield new clues about the malleability of human ageing in general and how it is influenced by stress," Picard says.

"Our data adds to a growing body of evidence demonstrating that human ageing is not a linear, fixed biological process but may, at least in part, be halted or even temporarily reversed."

Source: Science Daily: Excerpted material provided by Columbia University Irving Medical Center.

LIVING TILL 100: A CURSE OR A BOON

One view celebrates the fact that more people can be expected to live for 100 years or more. Another sees it as an apocalyptic disaster, as agedness "swamps" the resources of society needed to maintain itself. Yet another view juggles between the successes of more years of healthy active life and the failings of more years of living with disability and infirmity.

Rates of osteoarthritis, for example, which disables but does not kill you, have been rising over the last 25 years. Rates for Alzheimer's disease, which disables more than it causes death, have also grown but in a less pronounced manner. Although some chronic conditions affecting older people, such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, which kills and disables, have been falling (statistics available).

In Denmark, one of the few national surveys of nonagenarians was conducted around the turn of this century. The researchers found that the majority contacted had some disability and that women were more often affected than men.

The same researchers also observed that "about 10 per cent of the octogenarians and more than 55 per cent of the centenarians live in nursing homes, while dependency rises from approximately 30 per cent to 70 per cent, and the prevalence of Dementia rises from approximately 7 per cent to 50 per cent".

In the UK, one study of 85-year-olds found a median number of five diseases per person, with more than half suffering from hearing impairment, just over half from osteoarthritis, and just under half suffering from high blood pressure. Just under a quarter had some form of cancer. Less than 5 per cent told the researchers that their health was poor: most said it was good.

Wider society scarcely acknowledges these problems and most of those on the receiving end, whether carers or people being cared for, are simply too overwhelmed to do much about them.

Most people over 80 live alone. They often have only a few people to talk with. Meantime, stories of abuse, or TV footage of the inside of the nursing home paint a grim picture to all who watch, read or hear them.

For many of these people, life can be difficult. Estimates suggest that chronic pain "in people aged 85 years or older is common", affecting the majority of people from this age group.

Aged lives of quiet desperation are sadly not rare, nor are most lived in the heroic terms of the marathon-running nonagenarian that hits the news.

In drawing attention to this, we are not attempting to promote further victimhood. What we hope to achieve is to cast a little light upon the darker side of our ageing and of our ageing societies.

Old age should not be sought out just for the sake of it.

Excerpts - Paul Higgs is a professor in sociology of ageing at UCL, Chris Gilleard is a visiting research fellow in psychiatry at UCL. This article was originally published on *The Conversation* (theconversation.com)

TESTIMONIALS: What people say about us...

“ Ms Varsha Sinkar, Member, Neral Seniors Association. I attended the Webinar held on 4 September, on the subject of Dementia. It brought to light facts such as proper sleep, good nutrition and exercises to keep us away from all diseases. The speakers, Dr Joy Desai, Dr Prem and Mrs S Shraddha were explicit in delivering information. Thank you Graceful Living for holding this Webinar.

“ Mr Vrinda S Chitre. I attended your Webinar held in early September. My sincere thanks for the same and for planning the 'Eldercare Webinar' series. Since the lockdown, we are grateful to GL for arranging online series on elder care issues. Many of us have benefitted from them. Mr Gursahani is very competent and conducted the session well. All the speakers at the helm spoke well on the subject of Dementia. They pointed out the difficulties in handling Dementia patients. Mr Mahinder Singh concluded the session in an apt manner.

“ Mrs Leela Wankhede, retd section officer, O.S. Indian Railways, DRM office Bhusawal, Seniors Association Kalva, Thane district. Graceful Living programs are good and give a clear guideline of dos and don'ts especially for seniors. The previous *Gupshup* program was good. It was an opportunity for seniors to participate and share their thoughts. The session was conducted well and was very enjoyable. Mr Damle always calls us individually to inform us about the meetings. Ms Amruta and Ms Nandini make tremendous effort towards this program. Thank you GL for creating a good opportunity and enriching the lives of seniors.

“ Ms Suhasini Ghandekar, Thane Seniors Association. All your programs are very interesting and we, the elderly, are very grateful for the interest you take in us as a group. We get a lot of information from your regular sessions. The Brain Gym exercises are helpful. GL is doing a wonderful job by holding all these meetings.

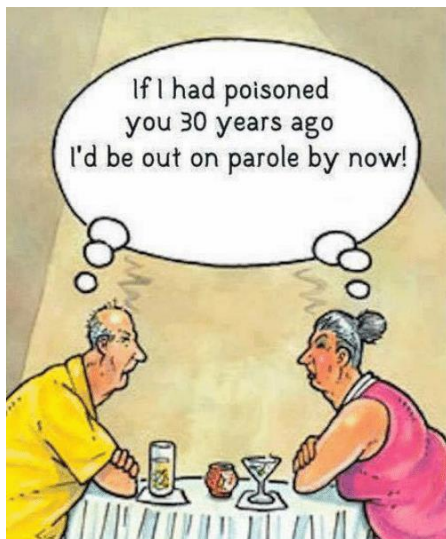
FUN TIMES

WORD PUZZLE

Find the words in the puzzle

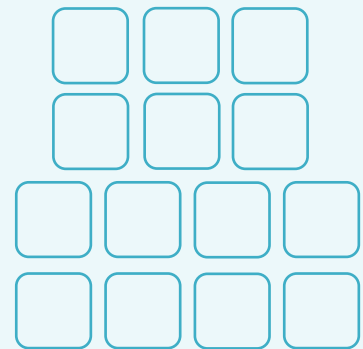
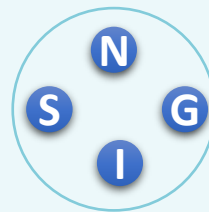
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D	A	E	B	G	N	E	U	T	U

OPAL	SHOES	PANAMA
COLOGNE	HOUSECOAT	BASKET
OVERALLS	TURBAN	APRON



FORM WORDS

From the letters in the circle below



VIEWPOINT

Hadn't the year just begun? Now it's already October, another festive month and veering towards the end of 2021. Right now, Covid doesn't seem that much of a threat. We are still in the second wave, and hopefully we won't get the third wave here in India. For that matter, we pray it vanishes from the world. Questions ruling our minds: Will we still be wearing our masks? For how long? The word goes around... yes, maybe till end 2022. In the meantime, ennui has set in to stay. Even though shops and restaurants have opened up, people are still wary of visiting crowded places and staying out late. In fact, people are scared to be out. The sanctity of the home rules. The comfort zone of 'home sweet home' seems to be the way of life. It will take some time before people do start to enjoy social outings.

The October issue carries the recent activities of Graceful Living. We had an interesting Zoom talk by our guest speaker, Ms Rajashree Parab, Financial Coach, an ex-banker who advised seniors on investments with the help of a PPP plan for 'good' investments. Our companionship sessions continue and after long we had a Webinar and the focus was on memory loss in older adults. A host of panelists spoke on the subject and enlightened the listeners. We have included a guest column by the renowned ophthalmologist, Dr Phiroze Patel, on the everyday issue of burning/itchy eyes while Dr Prem gives pointers on how to preserve memory in your senior years.

On the international news buzz, we have statistics on how people are living till the age of 100 with increased disabilities. But who really wants to live till 100 is the moot question. Prolonged life also means prolonged ailments. The remedies/cure must come with it.

The content of a recent Whatsapp video moved me. I will share it as it gives seniors hope in their children. A scene abroad: an old lady of 90 sitting at the dining table, eating her breakfast. Her son is taking her video and talking to her. She has Dementia and asks him who he is. He tells her he is her son and has shifted base to her house since three years. 'Why' she asks. He replies, 'You need support now and just as you have been a wonderful mother all along and taken care of me, I want to be a wonderful son and do the same for you'. Astounding! So what goes around can come around!?

Asha Gurnani Vohra
Editor



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