



Adult Day Care: An Alternative to Institutionalization

Janice M. Park, Ph.D.

Gerontology Specialist

America is graying. Today in the United States there are thirty-four million people over the age of 65 years, twice as many as just 30 years ago. In another thirty years, it is predicted that one-fifth of the total population will be over the age of 65. The trend toward an older society has grown gradually in the past, but a marked increase is expected as the "Baby Boomers" (born between 1946 and 1964) begin to reach age 65. Advances in medical technology are allowing people to live longer, though often in frail or poor health. While in the past, many people succumbed at a young age to acute illnesses such as pneumonia or infections, today many live long enough to develop multiple chronic diseases that eventually challenge their independence. Early in the 21st century, the number of frail elderly who will need assistance with care is expected to increase dramatically. Just in the last decade, the number of persons age 85 years and over grew by 37.5 percent and, of these, one million were age 90 years or older.

Who Cares for the Frail Elderly?

Currently, families provide about 80 percent of the care to frail or ill elderly family members, the majority of which still reside in their own homes. It is estimated that about 15 percent need assistance with one or more of the activities of daily living (ADLs). Only about five percent reside in nursing homes, and the remaining 15 percent live in various types of assisted living facilities. The majority of caregivers of the elderly are women, many of which are employed or additionally taking care of children or grandchildren. In the future, the percentage of women in the labor force will likely increase because of the large number of single women (never married, divorced, or widowed) who must work for a living to support themselves and family members. Cur-



rently, the average age of caregivers caring for an elderly parent is 57.5 years of age. Twenty-five percent of all caregivers are between the ages of 65 and 74 years and another 10 percent are age 75 years or older. Because of the high cost of health care and the impact of the health care reform movement, it is expected that families will provide for an even greater percentage of the frail elderly in their own homes and community.

Few caregivers are prepared for the task of caring for an elderly person. The caregiving process can be a very emotionally, physically, and financially draining experience. Families providing continuous care are at significant risk of developing personal health problems. Research shows that, as the older person grows increasingly frail, employed caregivers are increasingly more likely to place a family member in an institution than their unemployed counterparts. It is not uncommon for families to place an elderly family member in a nursing home because they themselves cannot manage or suc-

cessfully carry out the duties of full-time care, not because the person's condition deteriorated.

The catastrophic effects of caregiving may be reduced or buffered if caregivers use some outside support services, such as adult day care. Early use of adult day care to give the caregiver a few hours of temporary relief may enable a caregiver to continue giving care and delay or prevent placing the family member in a nursing home. To care for growing numbers of frail and physically challenged elderly, community-based care, such as adult day care services, is becoming a trend in the 1990's. There has been a growth in numbers of adult day care centers in the U.S., from 15 in the 1970's to over 3,000 today.

What is Adult Day Care?

According to Oklahoma Adult Day Care Regulations, "the purpose of adult day care is to provide a protective social environment which may include health, remedial, restorative, and social services designed to maintain maximum independence and to prevent premature or inappropriate institutionalization of functionally impaired elderly or disabled adults; to provide periods of relief for family caregivers, sometimes called respite care, to enable them to continue caring for an impaired person at home; and to enable family caregivers to continue gainful employment" (Adult Day Care Center Regulations, Oklahoma State Department of Health, Special Health Services-0501).

In Oklahoma, an adult day care center is defined as "a facility which provides basic day care services to four or more unrelated impaired adults for more than four (4) hours in a twenty-four hour period. A center shall be a distinct entity, either freestanding or a separate program of a larger organization. A licensed center shall have a separately verifiable staff, space, budget, and participants record system." Each center is required to be licensed by the Department of Health, and shall be subject to an annual review. A current license shall be posted in a prominent place at the center. Additional information related to Oklahoma Adult Day Care standards and regulations may be obtained from the Oklahoma State Department of Health, 1000 NE 10th St., Oklahoma City, OK 73117-1299.

Adult day care participants return home to be with the family at night and on weekends. It provides support in a protective setting for people who want to live at home, yet need supervision or companionship during

the day. Through individual care plans, an adult day care service can offer the type of care that enables frail or physically challenged persons to maintain or improve their level of functioning. The typical adult day care offers social, health, and recreational activities that the participant might not have if they were being cared for entirely within the home. This type of care is particularly beneficial to families who work outside the home during the daytime, yet want to continue giving care to an elderly person in the home. Adult day care can help families stretch limited resources to care for an elder when they could not afford to place the family member in a full-time nursing care facility.

Who Should Use Adult Day Care Centers?

Adult day care is appropriate for anyone who has a dementia, such as Alzheimer's disease, stroke and related disorders, mental retardation, developmental disabilities, chronic illnesses, physical frailty, or behavioral problems, such as wandering. Most centers require that the participant be mobile, either ambulatory or using a wheelchair or walker. Persons who have decreased physical, mental, or social functioning and need supervision and minor assistance with the daily activities of living, such as bathing, walking, toileting, dressing, or eating are eligible to attend.

Some adult day care centers offer counseling for the participants' family members and may host support groups for families. However, many families have difficulty finding the time and/or someone to watch the elderly family member so they can attend a support group meeting. Recent studies at Duke University Center for the Study of Aging have found that lots of information and moral support is exchanged among families when they come to pick up their elders, be it out in the parking lot or in an inside waiting area. Often, just the brief opportunity to visit with other husbands, wives, or adult children provides the support and encouragement that families need.

What Services Does Adult Day Care Offer?

Adult day care centers offer a broad range of services for participants with varied impairments. Each participant has a care plan, and activities are tailored to meet each person's specific special needs. Some are licensed to meet social needs, while others, often called adult day health centers, are licensed to offer various medical and rehabilitation services.

Services generally provided by all adult day centers include personal care supervision, such as bathing, shaving, personal hygiene, health monitoring, social services, meals and snacks, medication, transportation, therapeutic activities, such as crafts, singing, dancing, games, aerobic exercise, music, slide shows, outings, and information and referrals. Those licensed as adult day health centers may offer additional services, such as assessment, counseling, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, assistance with bathing and arrangements for cosmetology, barber, dentistry, podiatry, psychological care, eye care, audiology and other medical services.

Some adult day care centers have special units for dementia participants who need more one-on-one attention than other participants. Centers that provide one-on-one care have highly specialized staff trained to handle specific groups, including individuals with dementia, head injuries, sensory deficits, developmental disabilities, HIV/AIDS, or other special problems.

The focus may vary among individual programs, but typically, preliminary health and mental assessment, along with a physical examination by the individual's personal physician, is required before admittance to the program. Periodically, the personal physician must reassess the individual's condition and renew or change orders. The staff of the adult day care center is responsible for coordination of necessary therapies, arranging for physician contact, provision of nutrition education, and referral to medical, social, or financial agencies. All adult day care facilities must have emergency transfer services to a local hospital. Some services are offered in conjunction with a home health agency, if recommended by the participant's physician.

Where Are Adult Day Care Centers Found?

Adult day care centers may be free-standing facilities or may be located in facilities that house other groups or agencies, such as churches, hospitals, senior centers, and nursing homes. When buildings are shared, adult day care typically has its own designated space and staff.

Community-sponsored adult day care centers often use space available in existing structures within the community. Most easily accessible buildings that have space to accommodate large groups can be suitable locations to establish a day care facility.

Churches may operate adult day care centers either independently or in affiliation with other agencies. Typically, these centers supervise and promote socialization in a friendly environment. Small town or rural churches provide ideal locations because local residents are familiar with the church's activities and more likely to be accepting of its services. Also, most churches are unused during the week and have space appropriate for adult day care, such as the fellowship hall and a kitchen for meal and snack preparation. Additionally, congregations may view the center as a special ministry and thus make donations and volunteer help.

Adult day care housed adjacent to a nursing home can be cost effective because staff and other expenses are shared. Both nursing home residents and day care participants can receive needed therapy, dentistry, personal care, and other special services that are already in place in the nursing home. Social services, meal service, and recreational activities can also be combined with nursing home routines.

Adult day care programs affiliated with hospitals generally focus on physical rehabilitation and nursing services. Care participants are likely to be referred to these centers when discharged from the hospital because of the need for continued therapies or professional supervision.

How Do Participants Get to an Adult Day Care Center?

Transportation is an important issue for adult day care centers because it may be very difficult for family members to transport the elderly person to and from the center. Employed caregivers are likely to encounter difficulty coordinating arrival and departure times with work schedules. Other caregivers may be elderly or in poor health themselves and unable to transport the patient to the day care center. Therefore, some adult day care centers find it feasible to contract transportation with emergency service companies' taxi services and community senior citizens transportation services. Unfortunately, many communities, especially in rural areas, do not have local transportation options, so families must rely on their own ingenuity for arranging transportation. The success or failure of an adult day center may depend on the center's ability to provide transportation for participants.

What Does Adult Day Care Cost?

Adult day care services are typically more economical than other types of caregiver support services. The cost of one full day of care ranges from \$45 to \$65 per day (\$11,700-17,000) per year, about half the cost of a full-time home health aide or approximately half the cost of nursing home care for one year. Adult day care centers are required to establish policies and procedures governing rates and payments which include the charges for basic services and services that may be obtained on a fee basis but are not included in the basic services. The cost for day care will vary from region to region and also be dependent on the amount and type of services needed.

Depending on ownership, adult day care may be offered for no fee, or may be based on a sliding scale or full fee. Because public financing for day care is limited in most communities, establishment and maintenance are highly dependent on enrollment and users' abilities to pay for services. Sometimes local community groups and organizations sponsor an individual who otherwise could not afford to attend.

For financial survival, most adult day centers necessarily must contract with the Department of Human Services to fund services for low income participants. Centers designated as adult day health centers potentially can be reimbursed for services to participants eligible for community based care under the ADvantage Medicaid WAIVER program, providing the participant meets the eligibility criteria to qualify. Additionally, limited financial assistance may be available for eligible participants through the Veterans Administration.

Are There Standards Governing Adult Day Care Centers?

The National Institute on Adult Day Care has begun a long-range quality assurance process, designed not only to benefit providers and protect the public, but also to provide states with policy recommendations. In Oklahoma, all adult day care centers must abide by the Chapter 605 Adult Day Care Center Regulations. Regulations cover such areas as participant rights, licensure, organization and administration, admissions and discharges, staffing requirements, including staff ratios, staff qualifications, staff orientation and personnel records, service offered, and physical facility requirements.

What Should I Look for When Selecting an Adult Day Care Program?

Families contemplating the use of adult day care for a loved one should visit the center(s) and observe the facility structure, the staff, the number and accessibility of bathrooms, the cleanliness in the facility and maintenance of grounds, services available, hours that the center is open, whether those with only physical disability are separated from those who cannot communicate, and the cost. See the Checklist for Selecting an Adult Day Care Center.

When shopping for an adult day care center, look for a facility that offers the services which most closely match the needs of your family members as well as the caregiver. In some areas, the centers provides transportation to and from the center. Also, they may assist the older person with getting dressed to board the van. However, keep in mind that many communities do not have enough adult day care centers available to offer many choices.

Summary

Adult day care centers are increasing in popularity and are likely to be used more in the future as the increasing cost of health care and the influence of managed care necessitate families assuming greater responsibility for caring for frail elderly family members. How well adult day care can reduce stress to caregivers or delay or prevent institutionalization depends on the needs of the patient and the services available in the community. However, for the family caregivers who feel stressed out from the task of caregiving, adult day care may be a viable option.

For information on how to start an adult day care in your community, contact one of the following:

- The Oklahoma Geriatric and Adult Day Care Association, 5317 S. Atlanta Ave., Tulsa, OK 74105.
- Washington County Elder Care, 410 Frank Phillips Boulevard, Bartlesville, OK 74003, (918) 336-8500
- The National Institute on Adult Daycare: The National Council on the Aging : 409 Third Street SW, Washington, DC 20024

A Checklist for Selecting an Adult Day Care Center

Name of Center _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone number _____

Administrator _____

Assistant Administrator _____

Features to Consider

- | YES | NO | |
|-----|-----|---|
| ___ | ___ | Does the center comply with local and state health and safety codes? |
| ___ | ___ | Did the supervisor or social worker meet with you to develop a care plan? |
| ___ | ___ | Does the supervisor assume responsibility for the care given and is available for consultation or to resolve complaints? |
| ___ | ___ | Does the center offer a variety of supervised activities that correspond to the differences in the health, interest, and abilities of participants? |
| ___ | ___ | Is transportation available to and from the center? |
| ___ | ___ | Is transportation available to take participants to doctor's appointments? |
| ___ | ___ | Does the center plan trips outside the center (recreation, concert, community events)? |
| ___ | ___ | Does the center provide assistance in accessing other services (i.e. barber, dentist, etc.)? |
| ___ | ___ | Does the center provide breakfast? |
| ___ | ___ | Does the center provide counseling? |
| ___ | ___ | Are support services available to the participants' family members? |
| ___ | ___ | Does the center have arrangements in place to provide emergency medical care, if needed? |
| ___ | ___ | Does the center provide personal care, such as bathing and dressing a client? |

Staff and Training

- | YES | NO | |
|-----|-----|---|
| ___ | ___ | Are therapists licensed? |
| ___ | ___ | What is the staff to client ratio? |
| ___ | ___ | How often does a physician make rounds? |
| ___ | ___ | Is a registered nurse on duty? What hours? |
| ___ | ___ | Does staff receive special training to provide the types of service that the center offers? |
| ___ | ___ | Does the center provide in-service training for staff on a regular basis? |
| ___ | ___ | Are employees insured or bonded? |
| ___ | ___ | Does the center do a background check that includes credit histories? |
| ___ | ___ | Does the center do a background check of employee criminal records? |
| ___ | ___ | Does the center check references on employees prior to hiring? |

Where can I find information about adult day care in my community?

To find out more information about adult day care in your community contact:

- The Area Agency on Aging
- Local Social Service or Health Department
- Local Department of Human Services
- Mental Health Centers
- Local Senior Center
- Physicians
- Home Health Care Agencies
- Community Centers

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