

Helping the elderly case study sample

[Health & Medicine](#), [Body](#)



There are a lot of health complications that come about as an individual advances in age. As such, it is important to be keen on matters affecting the health of an elderly person. The major factors considered in this case are health and nutritional issues. As well known, nutrition plays a major role in the life of an individual and more so at the later years of life. This essay seeks to establish how the elderly can be assisted so as to deal with health issues related to iron balance in the body.

Helping the Elderly

Schaie and Willis (2002) present a situation concerning the elderly and how they can be assisted in matters related to their diet, especially the iron balance. This is mainly because there are conflicting issues related to the diet of the elderly and whether they should take iron supplements or not. As such, Schaie and Willis address several issues that are of concern to this essay. First of all, they look at the issue of iron deficiency in the elderly and they conclude that not all the aged people have a deficiency in iron. As such, taking of supplements without the recommendation of a physician could be quite risky for their health. It is, therefore, important to identify the facts behind the iron balance in the bodies of the elderly, thereby understand whether it is necessary to give them supplements or not.

As Schaie and Willis (2002) observe, iron deficiency is not common to all the elderly individuals. This is echoed by Anon. (2012). From the discussion, it emerges that iron can be easily gotten from the foods that the people eat. In as much as the diet of many of the elderly people is consistent with the

Western way of dining, it is undisputable that the iron that they get from the foods is enough to keep their bodies going.

Anon (2012) further indicates that instead of taking supplements, it would be much better to take foods that are rich in the mineral. This includes foods such as chicken, lamb, beef, organ meat, veal, fish, pork and turkey. These offer the heme iron. Crop sources offer non heme iron and these include nuts and seeds, vegetables, fruits, dried beans, eggs and grains. As seen from these lists, there is a wide variety of food sources of iron. As such, there is no reason as to why the elderly should go for supplements. After all, it is better to take the minerals in their natural form than when added in food fortification.

Another rational as to why no supplements are needed is that the daily requirements for iron are as low as 8 mgs. This can be reached by simply adhering to a proper diet. Gloria (2010) also has an input on this issue. She acknowledges that iron is in fact a vital mineral in the body, just as stated by Schaie and Willis (2002). However, she observes that too much of it could be harmful for the elderly. She notes that there is a condition called anemia of chronic disease. This is a situation where the body has enough iron stores but cannot utilize it simply because there are other health problems that interfere with its utilization. These health conditions include cancer, diabetes or infection. For such individuals, use of supplements does not solve the problem. Rather, it leads to an acceleration of the same as the excess iron is stored in body organs such as the liver, pancreas and the heart. Ultimately, the accumulation leads to arthritis and in some cases, organ damage.

As seen above, the issue of iron balance in the elderly is of utmost importance. Due to the risks involved, the elderly should be given proper nutritional counseling and their diet should be well planned. Most of all, they should never be put on supplements without the consent of a physician.

Anonymous. (2012). Elderly Nutrition - Vitamins and Minerals. Retrieved on 19th March 2012 from <http://www.caring-for-aging-parents.com/elderly-nutrition-vitamins-and-minerals.html>

Gloria, H. (2010). The Side Effects of Iron Supplements in the Elderly. Retrieved on 19th March 2012 from <http://www.livestrong.com/article/319130-the-side-effects-of-iron-supplements-in-the-elderly/>

Schaie, K. W., & Willis, S. L (2002). Adult Development and Aging, (5th ed.). New Jersey: Prentice Hall.