

For immediate release

Vancouver geriatrician shows how 90 can be the new 80

Medical advances in age-related diseases shift focus from achieving longevity to quality of life

Vancouver, May 22, 2012 – If you want to live well and happily into your 90s, a healthy lifestyle, adaptable personality and luck are essential.

That's according to Dr. Larry Dian whose tips for aging successfully will be the focus of an upcoming, free Dialogue on Aging public presentation offered by the Tapestry Foundation for Health Care.

"There are plenty of healthy 80-year-olds but fewer healthy 90-year-olds. Living healthily into one's 90s depends on a lot on factors beyond our control, including luck," said Dr. Dian, a specialist in geriatric medicine and clinical professor in UBC's department of medicine.

A healthy lifestyle is important throughout life, including in one's 80s and 90s. Dr. Dian prescribes maintaining a good body weight, minimizing alcohol use, avoiding smoking and high-risk hobbies, and getting regular exercise. He admits that, in one's 90s, exercise is complicated but still important. Poor balance creates a major health risk so the focus of any exercise routine from the age of 75 and up should be on balance and flexibility. Up to age 50, aerobic exercise is vital and, from 50 to 75, there should be an emphasis on resistance training to minimize muscle loss.

Dr. Dian says that most people don't get enough exercise despite its many benefits. A recent study in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America (PNAS) shows that exercise even improves memory.

However, he says the best tool for success is being able to adapt to the aging-related changes that are inevitable, even if one is fortunate enough to make it to one's 80s or 90s without developing any diseases or disabilities. He maintains that doing the same old thing when it no longer works is the wrong approach. He urges aging seniors to get help with activities such as bathing, and to use a cane or walker when they develop balance issues.

It's equally critical to make necessary adjustments early in the aging process while the body is still able to adapt. For example, the vast majority of people begin to lose their high frequency hearing as they age. The most successful users of hearing aids obtain them at an early stage – in their 60s as opposed to their 80s. If one waits till a condition reaches an extreme – particularly if one is in one's 80s – the brain is no longer adaptable enough to adjust to it, substantially diminishing the chance of success.

"In the 20th century, the average lifespan grew from 47 to 73 years. In the 21st century, the focus is now on how to delay or prevent the disabilities of aging. By offering the free Dialogue on Aging public presentation series, we hope to equip today's seniors with practical strategies to optimize quality of life," said Ann Adams, CEO of Tapestry Foundation for Health Care.

Dr. Dian's presentation, Successful Aging – Is 90 the New 80, takes place Wednesday, May 30 from 1:30 p.m. to 3 p.m. at Floral Hall at VanDusen Botanical Garden, 5251 Oak Street (at West 37th Avenue). To register, call 604.877.8335 or visit www.tapestryfoundation.ca. Dr. Dian will discuss factors surrounding successful aging such as: an effective exercise program; flexibility and balance; impact of reduced caloric intake on rate of aging; effect of ballroom dancing and red wine on successful aging; and what researchers have learned about the genetic make-up of those who live to 100 years. Join Dr. Dian as he shares his expertise, years of experience and sense of humor.

The final Dialogue on Aging presentation, *As Time Goes By*, is set for Wednesday, June 27. Led by physician Dr. Romyne Gallagher and barrister and solicitor Gerrit W. Clements, this panel discussion will explore what happens when, due to illness, one is no longer able to make decisions about one's care, and how one can prepare now so that one's wishes are carried out. These experts will share their stories of good and not-so-good planning. The presentation runs from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at Visitors Hall, VanDusen Botanical Garden.

To read more about the PNAS study, go to:

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3041121/?tool=pubmed>.

To find out how you can make a donation to the Tapestry Foundation for Health Care toward services and equipment to improve the quality of life for seniors, call 604.877.8335 or visit www.tapestryfoundation.ca.

About Tapestry Foundation for Health Care

Tapestry Foundation for Health Care is the amalgamation of three organizations with a long history of supporting compassionate health care in Vancouver – St. Vincent's, Holy Family and Mount Saint Joseph Hospital Foundations. It was established in 2007 as an umbrella fundraising organization to serve and support seven of 16 Providence Health Care facilities including Mount Saint Joseph Hospital, Holy Family Hospital, St. Vincent's Hospital Langara, Honoria Conway at St. Vincent's, Brock Fahrni Pavilion, Marion Hospice and Youville Residence. The Foundation supports these sites by raising funds for medical equipment, programs, services, education, and research in the field of elder care.

Through these sites, Tapestry Foundation raises funds for the diverse care needs of more than 700 seniors, and the ongoing needs for updated equipment and technology. Donations to Tapestry Foundation support purchases of medical equipment, quality of life programs and services, professional medical education, and geriatric research.

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