



The educational packages developed for people living with Alzheimer's disease and autism spectrum disorder and their caregivers offer a wealth of information in various formats.

13 November 2023, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran – The Iranian Ministry of Health and Medical Education has put in place a comprehensive self-care education programme tailored to people with disabilities and their caregivers. It achieved this in partnership with WHO, Tehran

University of Medical Sciences, the State Welfare Organization of Iran and various nongovernmental organizations.

The programme is made up of self-care training packages informed by a thorough needs assessment carried out via interviews and focus group discussions with experts, people with disabilities and caregivers. The diverse range of training packages address Alzheimer's disease, autism spectrum disorder, blindness and vision impairment, deafness and hearing loss, and cerebrospinal injuries.

The Alzheimer's disease and autism spectrum disorder training packages are designed to empower individuals and caregivers with vital knowledge and skills. These packages cover crucial topics such as the core concepts of Alzheimer's disease and autism and strategies to effectively support individuals affected by these conditions. There is guidance on the significance of preserving independence and rights, on using assistive learning tools, and on fostering communication and social connections. These 2 packages alone comprise a wealth of resources, including 95 minutes of video content, 40 minutes of motion graphics, 10 informative books and 7 infographics.

Dementia is a term that covers several diseases that affect memory, cognition and daily activities, including Alzheimer's disease. Dementia is a growing concern in the country, especially among older people. In 2016, a survey on dementia prevalence in the Islamic Republic of Iran reported a crude prevalence of 7.9% among individuals aged over 60 years.

Autism spectrum disorder is characterized by difficulties in social interaction and communication and atypical behavioural patterns. In the Islamic Republic of Iran, for every 200 live births, one child is diagnosed with autism.

The importance of self-care education for people with disabilities and their caregivers cannot be overstated. Lack of self-care skills can adversely affect lifelong learning, overall quality of life, adaptability, mental health, personal independence, employment opportunities and social participation. Equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills, individuals and their caregivers can enhance their daily lives, their chances of social success and their overall quality of life.

The Iranian Ministry of Health and Medical Education, in collaboration with its national and

international partners, is committed to enhance the lives of people with Alzheimer's disease and autism and their caregivers through these invaluable self-care training packages. The initiative helps to both empower and improve the well-being of people affected by these and other conditions.

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