The Geriatric Assessment is a multidimensional, multidisciplinary diagnostic instrument designed to collect data on the medical, psychosocial, and functional capabilities and limitations of elderly patients. The Geriatric Assessment is a diagnostic process and is often used to include both evaluation and management.

**The “Five I’s of Geriatrics.”**

1. Intellectual Impairment
2. Immobility
3. Instability
4. Incontinence
5. Iatrogenic Disorders (relating to illness caused by medical examination or treatment)

**Geriatric Syndrome** is a term that is often used to refer to common health conditions in older adults that do not fit into distinct organ-based disease categories and have multifactorial causes.

**Identifying Patients**

Here are some criteria for identifying patients that would benefit from a geriatric assessment:

- **Geriatric age.** The age often used is 65, but most people do not need geriatrics expertise in their care until age 70 or 75.
- **Medical comorbidities** (presence of two chronic diseases or conditions) existing such as heart failure and cancer.
- **Psychosocial disorders** such as depression or isolation
- **Specific geriatric conditions** such as dementia, falls, or functional disability
- **Previous or predicted high health care utilization**
- **Consideration of change in living situation** (from independent living to assisted living, nursing home, or in-home caregivers)
Geriatric Assessment

Areas of Assessment

Performing a comprehensive assessment is an ambitious undertaking. Below is a list of the areas geriatric providers may choose to assess:

- Current symptoms and illnesses and their functional impact.
- Current medications, their indications and effects.
- Relevant past illnesses.
- Recent and impending life changes.
- Objective measure of overall personal and social functionality.
- Current and future living environment and its appropriateness to function and prognosis.
- Family situation and availability.
- Current caregiver network including its deficiencies and potential.
- Objective measure of cognitive status.
- Objective assessment of mobility and balance.
- Rehabilitative status and prognosis if ill or disabled.
- Current emotional health and substance abuse.
- Nutritional status and needs.
- Disease factors, screening status, and health promotion activities.
- Services required and received.

A Comprehensive Geriatric Assessment is conducted by a multidisciplinary team. And there are six essential steps the team will undertake:

1. Gather Data
2. Discussion among the team, increasingly including the patient and/or caregiver as a member of the team
3. Development, with the patient and/or caregiver, of a treatment plan
4. Implementation of the plan
5. Monitoring the response to the treatment plan
6. Revising the treatment plan
Major Components of a comprehensive geriatric assessment that should be evaluated during the process are:

- Functional capacity
- Fall risk
- Cognition
- Mood
- Polypharmacy
- Social support
- Financial concerns
- Goals of care
- Advance care preferences

Some additional components may also be included:

- Nutrition/weight change
- Urinary incontinence
- Sexual function
- Visions/hearing
- Dentition
- Living situation
- Spirituality

When assessing functional capacity, it should be assessed at three levels:

1. **BADLs** (basic activities of daily living) BADLs refer to self-care that include:
   
   a. Bathing
   b. Dressing
   c. Toileting
   d. Maintaining continence
   e. Grooming
   f. Feeding
   g. Transferring
2. IADLs (instrumental or intermediate activities of daily living). IADLs refer to the ability to maintain and independent household which include:

   a. Shopping for groceries
   b. Driving or using public transportation
   c. Using the telephone
   d. Performing housework
   e. Doing home repair
   f. Preparing meals
   g. Doing laundry
   h. Taking medications
   i. Handling finances

3. AADLs (advanced activities of daily living) AADLs vary but these advance activities include the ability to fulfill societal, community, and family roles as well as participate in recreational or occupational tasks.