



**Regional Geriatric Program of  
Toronto**

*Affiliated with the University of Toronto*

## **GERIATRIC EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT : COURSE OUTLINE: DEVELOPED BY THE REGIONAL GERIATRIC PROGRAM OF TORONTO**

### **Course Description**

Our Emergency Departments are treating increasing numbers of seniors even though our training seldom prepares us for Geriatric Emergency Management. Building the skills to practice effective geriatric emergency management may be essential to preserving the emergency room as an attractive and effective health care workplace.

Canadians are living longer and frail seniors are presently the fastest growing demographic group in Canadian society. Frail seniors are those with complex co-morbidities and a significant incidence of cognitive impairment, are already significant group of patients seen in Emergency Departments and this phenomenon will increase further as the 'baby boomer' generation ages.

This workshop will address the learning needs of emergency nurses in this changing demographic reality, empowering them in their own care of the frail elderly and ultimately to lead to enhanced quality of care for the frail elderly clients in the emergency department.

### **Learning Objectives**

Workshop participants will be offered an opportunity to

1. Reflect on their own experiences and feelings, caring for the frail elderly in the emergency department;
2. Examine their level of knowledge of normal and abnormal aging processes, as these affect the presentation of frail elderly clients in the emergency department;
3. Understand the importance of effective geriatric emergency management
4. Increase their ability to identify frailty in the emergency department
5. Develop their clinical information-gathering skills, both formal and informal
6. Enhance their ability to make more effective decisions regarding the frail elderly client in the emergency department;
7. Understand the interface between the emergency department and the broader community.

### **Teaching methods:**

Brief lectures, edumetrics, interactive small group exercises, reflection and discussion, and case-based learning.

### **Workshop process:**

## **1. Introductions and overview**

During this component participants will come to understand each others experiences with seniors in emergency rooms, review the evidence on seniors in ER, and complete an assessment of attitudes, knowledge and learning interests.

## **2. Identifying the frail senior in the ER**

This component will be built around the Build-A-Case technique for case based learning. Participants will work together to create their own teaching cases which reflect their collective experiences with seniors in the ER

## **3. Gathering Useful Information**

With their own teaching case studies as a focus participants will work in small groups to review formal and informal information gathering approaches. Formal tools include brief screening instruments, the “Get up and Go” technique, Confusion Assessment and other Geriatrics at Your Fingertips Tools. While informal approaches include assessment opportunities during regular nursing tasks such as toileting, mobility assistance and etc. Participants will reflect on the value of these tools and the barriers to their adoption in the ER and continue to build their teaching case studies

## **4. Special Topics in Geriatric Emergency Management**

In an interactive lecture format, and in response to learning interests gathered during step 1, participants will review management issues in areas such as the “Geriatric Giants”, maintenance of continence, minimizing the need for restraint, preventing skin breakdown, “social admissions” family/caregiver issues, and ethics (eg. advance directives, informed consent, elder abuse).

## **5. Making Effective Decisions**

In the large group participants will review their teaching case studies and discuss clinical decision making around these cases.

## **6. You Are Not Alone**

The emergency nurse as part of a continuum of care. Topics include an overview of services affiliated with the Regional Geriatric Program, long-term care dilemmas, CCAC’s, community service agencies, advocacy groups and the best ways to get their assistance

## **7. Wrap-up and Evaluation**

*Students will be supplied with literature to review beforehand.*