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Healthy Aging

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All of us would like to live as long as possible. Can we ensure a life span of 100 years? This is not a dream, but is likely to happen. At the time of India's independence in 1947, the average life expectancy of an Indian was 32 years but now, it has crossed 70 years. If this trend continues, the number of people crossing 100 years of age will increase. The number of people above 60 years will be a large percentage of the population. This demographic change - of an ageing population is already happening now and especially so in Kerala.

This issue raises many questions. Are human bodies capable of a healthy life, when we become old? Will all the body systems work properly? If not, what should be done? How productive, will the aging population be? What will be their contribution to society?

Does the aging population need physical, emotional and economic support? Who will be there to support them? A hundred-year-old lady will have a 70 to 80-year-old son or daughter and 40 to 60-year-old grandchildren. How will they support the aged parent?

Ageing of the population has become inevitable. But 'Healthy Aging' is the real need of the hour. WHO has declared the decade 2020-2030 as the decade of Healthy aging.

Kerala University of Health Sciences (KUHS) sees this issue, of the ageing population as an opportunity and a challenge. Ensuring "Healthy living" in society through academic interventions is what the Health University intends to do. KUHS has decided to have a series of brainstorming programs all over the state to evolve strategies for promoting healthy aging. The best brains in the world will be invited to give ideas and the ideas thus generated will be published and propagated. Changes will be made in the curriculum of the Health Science students. Government will be requested to implement the ideas and strategies so generated.

The first program in this series will be held at Baby Memorial Hospital, Kozhikode, Kerala, India. This will be the beginning of a meticulously planned journey.

I sincerely thank all those who are participating in this very important task. We must succeed; since all of us have to live longer and remain healthy throughout.