



COMLAT

Latin-American and Caribbean Committee International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics (COMLAT - IAGG)

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CORRESPONDENCE:

Dr. González 532 Florida
Uruguay PO 94000

Phone:

598-99355454

E-mail

comlat.iagg@gmail.com

The illness caused by SARS-COV-2 that has spread worldwide is currently causing severe damages to the health systems and economies of Latin America and the Caribbean, for which the region was not prepared as they're in the stage of development and in an accelerated process of ageing and demographic transition and affecting in particular the elderly population.

Taking into account that the Inter-American Convention on Protecting the Human Rights of Older Persons declares, in its articles 5 and 6, the "Equality and non-discrimination for reasons of age" as well as "Right to life and dignity in old age", the Latin-American and Caribbean Committee of the IAGG (COMLAT), facing the current situation with health systems collapsing in some regions of Latin America and the Caribbean, states:

-The care and preservation of human life is an ultimate good, which must be ensured for all persons, and that making way towards end of life or palliative care should only happen when the progression of illness or deterioration determine that necessary measures must be taken to ensure comfort and a good death with the proper care.

-Any consideration that takes only age into account in the decision making process is discrimination incompatible with human rights. The proper valuation of older persons, using the instruments of geriatric medicine, allows to clearly set the clinical assistance level and the need for resources to keep assistance in accordance with the ethical principles of autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence and justice.

-We suggest governments should take into consideration the opinions of the different geriatrics services in their countries, which should aid in the decision making.

-Consequently:

We encourage the region's governments and healthcare systems to not discriminate on the grounds of age, prioritizing adequate use of resources according to the people's needs, ensuring dignity to all and non-discrimination under any circumstance.

May 20, 2020.