



# CFAS *News*

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CENTRE FOR AGEING STUDIES (CFAS), UNIVERSITY OF GHANA



## Hello!

Greetings and a warm welcome to our very first issue of the CFAS newsletter; a quarterly publication that includes information highlighting issues on ageing. The CFAS newsletter is a medium for the ageing community and the general public to share information. We hope that you enjoy reading each issue of our newsletter. This publication is for you! If you have any letters, articles, opinions and news items, you may send them personally to the: Editor, [cfas@ug.edu.gh](mailto:cfas@ug.edu.gh)

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## Where did it all start?

The Centre for Ageing Studies was started on the University of Ghana campus in August 2016.

The mission of the Centre is to facilitate the university's response to the many issues of aging by disseminating information about ageing, and advances in research to the scientific community and the general public. The centre enjoys the active participation of stakeholders, students and over 20 faculty and staff from key disciplines at the University of Ghana.

❖ *There is the need to start an approach to involve varied disciplines to address the issues of ageing”*



## Welcome Address

Our country has experienced rapid population change over the past few years in terms of aging. Concerns on establishing welfare policies to cope with the ageing process is another challenge. The establishment of the Centre for Ageing Studies on the University Campus is to address such issues and also focus on ageing related research and education.

The Center's mission is to provide resource for healthy ageing, conduct cutting-edge research and provide training in gerontology. We disseminate information about ageing and advances in research to the public, health care professionals, and the scientific community. Its vision is to advance multidisciplinary research and educational programmes consisting of multifaceted approach to ageing that will promote well-being in the aged population. Further, to be a leader in ageing research in Africa.

The Centre draws together an interdisciplinary team of more than 20 faculty members, students, stakeholders and the community that work together to raise issues related to ageing and informed ageing research.

The Centre plans to develop academic programmes leading to the accumulation of academic credit and graduate degrees. It provides resource facilities for healthy ageing programmes; the idea is to be able to address the challenges of older people in our community through research, education and community engagement.

We encourage stakeholders, philanthropists and all persons interested in the issues of ageing, to come on board and address the problems facing our ageing community.

❖ "...a major influence on cutting edge research in the sub-region"

# The Inside Story

**S**o we caught up with the Director of the Centre, Prof. C. Charles Mate-Kole to get his account of the challenges and successes he has faced since the inception of the Centre.

**Ed:** Why do you see a need for this Centre on the university campus?

**Prof:** the need arose from the fact that as a country with a very increasing ageing population, there is the need to develop a cohesive multidisciplinary programme involved in the study of ageing. The centre therefore provides a platform for various disciplines to engage in a collaborative research.

**Ed:** When was it founded and what do you do?

**Prof:** the Centre was founded in August 1, 2016. The planning however started from mid 2014 by the former Vice Chancellor, Prof. Ernest Aryeetey and the Provost of the College of Humanities, Prof. Samuel Adjei-Mensah. Since its inception, the Centre has received support from Prof. Ebenezer Oduro Owusu, current Vice Chancellor and Prof. Samuel Kwame Offei, Pro Vice Chancellor. They have provided support to ensure the sustainability of the Centre.

**Ed:** How do you become a part of the Centre?

**Prof:** you need to have interest in ageing research and ageing related activities.

**Ed:** What impact do you wish to have on the ageing population?

**Prof:** to understand issues about ageing and age related research. To enhance active ageing programmes and resources through community outreach and to become a major influence on cutting-edge research in Africa and globally.

We welcome the arrival of this newsletter as a medium of communication with the public.

❖ *“they provide a wealth of skills, mentorship and wisdom...”*

# Ageing World

The world's older population has continued to grow at an unprecedented rate. People aged 69 and above make up 12.3% of the global population and this is expected to rise further to 21.5% by 2050. In many countries, people continue to live longer with fewer children leading to an increase in the number of our senior citizens.

This increased numbers of elderly citizens present benefits as well as challenges for any society. On one hand, they provide a wealth of skills, mentorship and wisdom and on the other hand, the environment, health care systems and their finances are not well adapted to support the ageing population.

Currently, Europe is the world's oldest region with 24% of its population over 60 years old. This percentage is projected to increase to 34% by 2050. Although Africa has the youngest age distribution, it is also projected to age rapidly with the population aged 69 and over, rising from 5% to 9% by 2050.

## IMPLICATIONS

Although people are living longer, the prevalence of diseases such as dementias and non-communicable like diabetes and cancer are increasing as the global population increases. This puts a greater strain on the health care systems available.

Older people are also vulnerable to loneliness and social isolation which may be due to loss of friends and family. These issues necessitate preventive healthcare solutions.

Workers today, may even resist retiring in their 60s for economic reasons. Employers who may retain their services could enjoy major benefits particularly in terms of mentoring younger employees.

It is essential for societies to adapt to these demographic changes and invest in healthy ageing to enhance quality of life among the seniors.

## QUESTIONS

- ❖ Which is the oldest region in the world?
- ❖ Which countries have the largest population of older persons?
- ❖ Which regions of the world are ageing fastest?
- ❖ Why do people use anti-ageing products?

Send answers to [cfas@ug.edu.gh](mailto:cfas@ug.edu.gh) If you are interested in sharing your personal experience contact [cfas@ug.edu.gh](mailto:cfas@ug.edu.gh)

❖ *“A lot more older people than before are reporting disorders like dementias and other non-communicable diseases that could be managed”*

# Ageing In Ghana

Africa is recorded as the world’s youngest continent. About 80% of its population are below the age of 60. Owing to this age distribution, the urgent needs of Africans include employment for the mass youth, schools for education, and the basic needs such as food and water to keep them active. This notwithstanding, recent projections have suggested a 10% increase in the aged population by 2050. When this happens, there will be a heightened need to provide for their health and general well-being. Nonetheless, in developing countries such as Ghana, resources for general medical care is limited.

Specialists such as geriatricians and ageing experts are inadequate. Thus, it is difficult to cater for the ageing population here in Ghana when it arises if measures are not put in place now. Some researchers on ageing have seen this problem and tried to find other means of survival for older people.

In a typical Ghanaian household, everyone has a role to play, whether young or old. The elderly are entrusted with family lands and are expected to officiate in ceremonies such as marriages, naming ceremonies and funerals. Living conditions for the elderly in Ghana has been to live with their children or the extended family system.

The situation as it stands is not pleasing. A lot more older people than before are reporting disorders like dementias and other non-communicable diseases that could be managed. However, given the ratio of medical practitioners to the populace, older adults do not seem to receive the special attention they deserve. The major concern of researchers, clinicians, stakeholders and the community is to have policies and adequate infrastructure and resources in place to adequately address the ageing population when it arises.

# Events

- ❖ *“The theme addressed pertinent issues facing the elderly and deliberated on ways to solve them”*

## Dialogue Series

The fifth of the College of Humanities Dialogue Series was under the theme; **“Retirement at sixty: A Blessing or a Curse?”** The Director for the Centre, Professor Mate-Kole together with Professor Fosu (ISSER), Mrs. Rose Gomez and Mr. Ernest Okoh made up the speakers for the day. The theme addressed pertinent issues facing the elderly and deliberated on ways to solve them. Issues raised included health problems to expect at old age, managing finances for retirement and various ways to stay healthy and make retirement beneficial.



Prof. Augustine Fosu addressing the audience on ways they can invest in their youthful age in order to have a stable economic life at old age



A section of speakers at the 5th dialogue series



A section of audience at the 5th dialogue series

# Events

❖ *“Football age: Is it only in football?”*

## Colloquium

The Centre for Ageing Studies has started a monthly colloquium series where varied research will be presented and discussed. The first presentation was on the topic **“football age: Is it only in football?”** The series is opened to all members of the University community and interested persons outside.



## Dance Workshop

The Dance and Creative wellness programme was under the theme “Dance for health, transforming lives through dance”. The programme targeted older adults; 50 years and above. The programme activities constituted elements which were to assess the coordination, concentration and confidence of the participants. The dance and fitness activities will run once every semester. The University community and the general public are invited to participate in the activities.



# Events

## Press Conference

As part of measures to spearhead research and policies towards the welfare of the aged, the Centre organized a press conference to launch its first Annual Research Conference and celebration of the International Day of Older Persons. Dr. Kingsley Nyarko, chairperson for the Conference Committee addressed questions on a National Policy for the aged in Ghana. He explained that, although there has been some drafts of a policy since 2002, the policy would soon be placed before parliament to be passed into law.



Prof. Mate-Kole, Director, addressing the public on the Centre's objectives for the Ageing Community.





# Events

## International Day of Older Persons

The Centre for Ageing Studies celebrated the UN International Day of Older Persons here in Ghana to create awareness of the challenges facing our older adults. As part of the celebration, there was health screening for the elderly and traditional dance and fitness exercises.



Seniors being engaged in traditional dance and games for fitness.



Health screening for the elderly



A section of older adults at the international day of older persons.

# Events

❖ *“multidisciplinary approach to ageing across the lifespan”*

## 1st International Research Conference

The two day research conference organized by the Centre for Ageing Studies was on the theme: **“multidisciplinary approach to ageing across the lifespan”**. Research presentations concerned ways to encourage healthy ageing, policies on ageing, economics and ageing and care of the elderly.



**From left:** Mr. Collins Agyemang Badu, Dr. Ablo (Chief Director of Policy, Min. of Gender), Dr. Kingsley Nyarko, Prof. Angela Ofori-Atta, Prof. Mate-Kole, Dr. Elsie Effah Kaufmann, Prof. Agyei-Mensah (Provost, COH), Prof. Ama de-Graft Aikins, Mr. Kofi Adusei (Rep, Min. of Health), Prof. Abena Oduro.



A section of participants at the CFAS International Research Conference.

# Events

❖ *“Ageing in Context: the impact of culture and religion on health and well-being of the elderly”*

## Colloquium

Rev. Dr. Samuel Ayete-Nyampong, speaker at the Centre’s second colloquium addressed the topic: “Ageing in Context: the impact of culture and religion on health and well-being of the elderly”. He discussed various ways by which seniors are able to cope and live healthily at old age. He encouraged the elderly to hold on firmly to their deities and religious beliefs if that is what kept them going.



Speaker: Rev. Dr. Ayete-Nyampong (Clerk of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana).



A section of audience at the colloquium



Invited guests and audience at the colloquium

## From the Editorial Team

Dear Readers!

We are pleased to keep you informed on the activities of the Centre for Ageing Studies. Our quarterly newsletters aim to address concerns of the rapidly growing ageing population, including health, retirement issues and stereotypes, and to stimulate collaborative programmes and research in this area.

Do subscribe to the CFAS newsletter to receive updates on our activities, articles and projects. You may also log on to the Centre's website, [cfas@ug.edu.gh](mailto:cfas@ug.edu.gh) for the newsletter.

The May issue will introduce the projects and various outreach the Centre is involved with, as well as the committees and stakeholders behind them.

We welcome articles (ageing studies related), questions and suggestions for our next issue!



@cfas\_ug



Centre for Ageing Studies



[cfas.ug.edu.gh](mailto:cfas.ug.edu.gh)

## International Day for Older Persons



## 1st International Research Conference



For membership, collaboration or to sponsor  
any of our activities, you may contact the  
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