The History of the Residential Care Environments for the Elderly in Iran

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Abstract : This paper traces the back history of environments in which the elderly who could not stay in private dwellings were accommodated and taken care of in Iran in the 19th century. It investigates the factors impacting on the establishment of the first nursing homes in Iran in 1973. Today in 2020, the nursing home is the only available model of residential care environment for the elderly who cannot stay in private dwellings in Iran. Understanding the evolution of these environments from a socio-political perspective is crucial before studying nursing homes' response to the elderly and society in Iran and seeking any alternative model specific to the context. However, no study on the evolution of these environments in Iran was found. Thus, this paper, by going through primary and secondary resources and from a socio-political perspective, investigates how the elderly who could not stay in private dwellings were accommodated and taken care of in Iran in the 19th century. Maristan, in the early 19th century in Egypt as a part of Islamic territory, is an example of such spaces in which homeless elderly were kept and taken care of. This study suggests that in the 19th century in Iran in lack of significant governmental influence over people's social affairs, any potential environments accommodating and taking care of the elderly who could not stay in private dwellings (mainly homeless) in Iran were probably regulated or supported by local figures, specifically clergies, as a response to the need for taking care of the vulnerable members of society.

Keywords : nursing home, ageing, Iran, middle east, Qajar, Pahlavi
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