5M’s (or Now 4M’s) of Geriatrics Incorporating the Principles into All Patient Care
By Jesus Lehi Garci, MD, Clinical Assistant Professor of Medicine, Associate Program Director
Division of Geriatrics, NYU Langone Long Island School of Medicine

There is one thing for certain, if you live long enough, you’ll get old. This statement has never been truer, thanks to the significant advances in medicine. Although most people whose age can live a healthy and prosperous life, we are all susceptible to developing unwelcome medical conditions and disabilities that can transition us into a complex person that requires a modified approach to manage our ailments.

Geriatric education in medical schools is limited, offering a sliver of a clerkship and an optional rotation elective in the geriatric department, if available. In contrast, during residency, residents will be exposed to a great number of older adult patients who will present with multiple and complex disease states, and treatments based on limited trials or research leading to insufficient data on important decision guidelines for some of the most common diseases. Therefore, both residents and our senior population would benefit greatly by incorporating a more structured approach.

The 4M’s provides a systematic approach to the older adult aiming for important principles including Mobility, Medications, Mind, and Multi-complexity, and what Matters Most. This framework also teaches practical tools that can be applied in the dreaded 15-minute visits of primary care, optimizing the care and outcomes of our elderly patients.

• Mobility
  o Impaired gait and balance
  o Fall injury prevention

• Mind
  o Mentation
  o Dementia
  o Delirium
  o Depression

• Medications
  o Polypharmacy
  o Adverse medication effects and medication burden
  o Optimal prescribing and deprescribing

• Multi-complexity and what Matters Most
  o Complex biopsychosocial situations
  o Patient-centered care to prioritize meaningful health outcome goals
  o Care preferences

As you can see, the field of geriatrics is broad, but the principles guiding the field are elegantly encapsulated within the 4M framework. Understanding the principles of geriatrics is the first step in this learning process. Effective tools will help the learner efficiently obtain pertinent information, prioritize care, and promote patient safety.

This comprehensive assessment improves outcomes in care for our frail, complex, and vulnerable population.