Abstract: Background: Growing elderly population is a phenomenon which has great political, economic, and social consequences. The aim of this qualitative study was to explore the perspectives of Iranian elderly regarding healthy eating and physical activity.

Methods: Ten focus group, each one consisted of 6 participants (N = 60) were conducted in elderly centers in Tehran. Convenience purposeful sampling was used from 3 elderly centers. Inclusion criteria were as: aged 60 years and over, caring in elderly centers, not hospitalization in past four weeks. The Ethics committee of Tehran university of Medical Sciences approved the study.

Results: Participants articulated their beliefs regarding healthy eating and physical activity through 4 themes: Meaning of healthy aging, Meaning of healthy eating and regular physical activity behaviors, perceived benefits of and barriers to healthy eating behaviors and perceived benefits of and barriers to physical activity.

The results of this study revealed that different people verified different meaning of health. These meanings were included: complete body wellbeing, complete individual satisfaction, and absence of pain and disorder.

Nearly most of participants revealed that healthy eating means adequate eating, eating according age, avoidance from hypo and hyper alimentation, and consumption of fruits and vegetables. The participants in this study believed that healthy eating behavior was influenced by age, level of activity, income and mass media.

Almost all participants believed that physical activity was beneficial for their health. Almost all participants were in agreement that benefits such as meeting a lot of people and communication with them, decreasing tension, being open minded, feeling courage, hopefulness, better sleep, enduring difficulties, decreasing Alzheimer, improving health, improving body function such as cardiovascular system, freshness, prevention of obesity, increasing strength would achieve through physical activity.

In terms of barriers to physical activity, participants raised issues that could be grouped under 3 themes: 1) Lack of motivation and gloomy mood 2) physical health limitations, and 3) cultural and custom barriers.

Elderly, Healthy ageing, Healthy eating, Qualitative study, Physical activity.

Presentation: Oral