Introduction:
Iran is now grappling with the population ageing phenomenon. Given the scenario that while it has a relatively young population, the proportion of elderly is projected to double in less than 20 years. The Islamic Republic of Iran has to consider ageing issues more seriously now than in the past. Against the background of increasing proportion of older persons in Iran, a qualitative research with a purpose of exploring the nature of caring behaviors among the elderly at urban health care centers in Isfahan was undertaken.

Methodology:
Using a grounded theory approach, the study was guided by this question: What is the nature of caring behaviors for the elderly in primary health care centers? Using the process of purposeful and theoretical sampling, data were collected from a number of sources, through 24 in-depth interviews with elderly, their family, and health care providers, 4 focus groups (8 participants in each group) with primary health care managers, participants’ observation and researcher memos. The researcher used constant comparative method of data analysis to discover the reality of caring behaviors.

Findings:
Two main categories emerged from the analysis to describe elderly' caring behaviors. Emerged categories explained nature of caring behaviors of the elderly in elderly primary health care. Their behaviors manifested as internal and external responses. The internal responses included categories depicting 'accepting conditions as the only way', 'feeling of being at the end of the way', 'death expectation in spite of potential abilities', and 'motivational weakness'. External responses manifested as 'non-adoption of healthy lifestyle' and 'non-adoption of proper caring behaviors'.

Discussion:
This qualitative study has gathered data that could be used by policy makers and health care providers and researchers concerned with elderly health and their quality of life. Based on these findings, it is recommended that providing primary health care for the elderly should be embedded in a comprehensive approach which aims to change the conditions affecting the caring behaviors of the elderly primary health care in urban areas.

Key Words: Caring behaviors, elderly health, primary health care, Isfahan

Presentation: Oral