

Late adulthood and end of life

[Life](#), [Death](#)



Late Adulthood End of Life Latonia Wells Psy 375 04-07-2011 Charisse Woodley Late Adulthood and End of Life Paper Late adulthood is the last stage of life, it starts around the age of 65 to death. This is considered the age of wisdom and strength. Life starts from the moment of conception and from that moment until death people experience different factors in their lives that can determine how long their life span will be. Late adulthood is the stage of life many people wish they could be able to reach. The purpose of this paper is to discuss how health and wellness can be promoted in late adulthood to decrease the effects of aging. We will also explore ageism and some of the stereotypes associated with late adulthood. Last, we will explore death and dying to receive a better understanding of different viewpoints and how different cultures view death and dying. Even though we all will age there are measures that can be taken to reduce the effects of aging. There several factors related to promoting health and wellness. Successful aging can happen with the presence of certain physical factors that include exercise, nutrition and, proper sleep. Psychological and sociological factors also play a role in how individuals age. All the vital bodily systems- cardiovascular, respiratory, digestive, and renal/urinary - sustain life (Berger, 2008). Disease is likely to occur when bodily function slow down and decrease in their performance. Changes in social relationships, economic status, and developing coping skills can help adjust to the changes during this time in life. There three components are needed to achieve longevity. Physical activity is one of the most important factors and it slows down the onset of conditions that could turn out to be chronic. Daily activity and exercise can decrease the risks of heart disease, diabetes and other

diseases. Studies have shown that doing strength training along with some type of cardio exercise increases how the heart rate and improves and preserves muscle mass. One benefits of exercising is to help improve strength, and to reduce obesity and disease. Proper nutrition is another key factor in preventing problems that occur with old age. Poor nutrition is a factor that contributes to high blood pressure, diabetes, and strokes. There has been conflict about what is considered the best diet in late adulthood but studies show that a good diet is low in fats and consists of plenty fruit and vegetables with moderate grains and proteins. Making these simple changes can have a positive effect on the individuals health and add longevity to their lives. Sexual activity should remain an important part of the happiness in older adults. During this time the intercourse is less, but the intimacy should increase. Women may not feel the need to engage in sexual activity because they have strong feeling is no longer viewed as being sexually attractive and men worry about issues with sexual dysfunction. Despite the physical changes the body endures, sexual activities can continue to flourish throughout the life span. There several chronic conditions that have become problems in late adulthood they include arthritis, hypertension, hearing loss, heart problems, and sinus problems. Mental health plays an important role in how individuals embrace life changes and adapt to aging. Depression is common in late adulthood and it affects other areas of life. It is very important to maintain good mental health in late adulthood. Acquiring a strong faith is helpful in staying focused and keeping a positive outlook on life no matter what stage they are in. People who have a strong faith have a more positive outlook and they embrace a stronger feeling of acceptance

and desire to give to others. A strong religious base helps individuals deal with stressful situations and emotional issues. Late adulthood does not mean that life has to stop, it begins but on another level. Many people in late adulthood go into it with the negative thoughts and sometimes disengage themselves from others. Staying active and involved in some type of activity or social setting is important because it promotes a sense of belonging and content. Marriage and cohabitation helps to promote wellness because positive relationships offer a sense of belonging and happiness. Relationships provide nurturing and support. Aging is a process of life that we will one day experience. Ageism can be defined as prejudice and discrimination directed toward older people, and it is manifested in several ways. Gerontology is the study of old age and is becoming popular in efforts to study the life span for longevity. There have been negative attitudes toward older people regarding their competence, attractiveness, and they endure discrimination when it concerns jobs and behaviors. Stereotyping of older people in late adulthood is also an aspect of ageism. Some of the stereotypes people in late adulthood endure consist of people believing that with old age your body breaks down and does not function the same. For example, elderly people should not drive at night or some should not be allowed to have a driver's license. There are several changes that occur with old age such as physical, intellectual and, socioemotional developments. In late adulthood individuals experience a variety of physical and psychological changes. One of those changes is physical strength and endurance this declines because the individual is not at the peak of his or her physical strength. Physiological changes occur and neural processes decrease in the rate of which they were

used to functioning. Bodily functions and systems such as the circulatory, respiratory, digestive, muscular and sensory systems are less efficient and do not function at the level in which they once functioned. Sensory changes are common in late adulthood, in this stage of life glaucoma and cataracts become a common issue in individuals. Vision is also obscured with age because lens in the eye yellows and this makes it hard to discriminate between certain color. Eyes muscles also become stiff making it hard to focus and move the eyes. Hearing decreases, and makes it difficult to hear higher tones. In late age hearing loss can result in psychological damages leaving the individual thinking they are in adequate and avoidant of social situations causing low self esteem and frustration. Changes in taste take place because older adults have one third of their taste buds and the ability to taste declines with the ability to smell. During this time individuals can also experience severe problems with teeth and gums that lead to the use of dentures. Bone mass diminishes and diseases like osteoporosis occur. Muscles weaken because of lack of exercise. Loss of hair is another concern and all of the senses are experience decrease in sensitivity, such as poor eyesight and hearing loss. Intellectual changes occur in late adulthood but this does not mean there is a reduction of ability and how individuals function. In late adulthood individuals become more reliant on two types of intelligences to assist with daily functioning. Fluid intelligence is their ability to observe and use patterns and relationship sequences to solve problems. Their crystallized intelligence helps them to accumulate the information needed to solve problems and make decisions. Dementia is another change experienced in late adulthood; signs of dementia include memory loss,

difficulty communicating and loss of organization skills. Dementia is a disorder that affects about 15% of people over the age of 65. Alzheimer's disease is considered the leading cause of dementia. Alzheimer's disease is characterized by the proliferation of plaques and tangles in the brain. These are abnormalities in the cerebral cortex that destroyed the ability of neurons to communicate with each other and thus stop brain functioning (Berger, 2008). There about 4.5 million people living with Alzheimer's disease in the United States it is the fifth leading cause of death in individuals aged 65 or over. The cause of Alzheimer's has not been determined. Research has shown that brain tissue deteriorates causing loss of memory and knowledge. The aging process has an impact on our health and ultimately ends in death. There theories of aging, the most common theory is known as wear and tear. Wear and tear is a view of aging as a process by which the human body wears out because of the passage of time and exposure to environmental stressors (Berger, 2008). A program theory is when someone dies of an accident or disease and the cause of death is known. Programmed theories are associated with our genetic codes and promotes how we age and when we will die. The other theory is damage theory and this is when damages to organisms are responsible for deaths that occur. It has been believed that people who know they are dying have certain reactions to knowing what is to come. Those reactions are denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. Denial when reality is isolation from what is taking place. Anger sets in when the individual who is dying feels like it should not be his or her time. When the person dying pleads for more time this is considered bargaining. Depression occurs when the individual realizes death is

inevitable and begins to separate from other due to frustrating. Acceptance sets in when the individual finds peace with dying. Dying and death are profound aspects of human experience whose definitions and meanings are fabricated through cultural and historical lenses. Though death is biologically inevitable, it is also a social fact; knowledge about it is made (2004). Death and dying is something every individual will experience at some time in life. The issue of death and dying has an impact on all who has experienced or will experience it. Death affects people on so many levels because of the perception and views about death. My family recently experienced the death of my grandmother. The experience was hard for everyone in the family because of what my grandmother meant for the family. She was the backbone of the entire family and the reason we all would come together throughout the year. My grandmother believed in families being close and spending time with each other and most of all the younger generations knowing who their family was. Losing an important person in your family structure makes you wonder how things will be moving forward. I can honestly say my grandmother's passing there have not been any family get together and what was she was all about keeping her family together. My attitude about her death is that she is in a better place and that she does not have to suffer or live in pain. It was hard watching her in the later adulthood years, because she was so independent and a go getter. My grandmother would get her buggy and walk to the store before she would get someone to bring her and I remember one day realizing she was gone and getting in the car to go pick her up. When I found her she told me she did not want a ride home but I could take the groceries. This was her attitude and how she kept

herself going, she was always active. Seeing her bound to a chair and not being able to do anything for herself was hard because I knew she would rather be cooking or out taking her a walk. Death can impact us on a personal and a cultural level. Death has been and will always be a hard issue to understand, especially when the person is very close to you. Society has different views about death and it seems like everyone has difficulties dealing with the issue. Death and dying has always been an interesting issue to understand and interpret. Each person has his or her own view of death and attitude toward it. However, the society as the main influencer has a huge impact on people's perception of death. The attitudes of the society toward death have been changing over the time. Fear has always been one of the most common attitudes towards death. However, today's society has developed many other attitudes. American culture has strange views about death and people are sometimes confused with death issues. They can accept the death of an older person but cannot accept the death of a child. Is this because the older person has had time to live and experience life and the child did not receive that chance. People with different religious beliefs have different views on death and they accept death in different ways. Death in the eyes of the media raises questions because they only seem to cover stories of the "important deaths", why are some deaths important enough to get media covering but other are not. People in different professions also have different view on death. For example a person that work in a hospital may have different views and experiences with death as a person who work at a school. Death and dying will always be an issue that is hard to accept and deal with, but it is something we will all experience at some time in life.

How we accept it depends on where we are mentally, emotionally and spirituality Since we have evaluated health and wellness to give a better idea of what individuals in late adulthood can do to add to their longevity, it is easier to understand some of the stereotypes older people face of their ages. We have explored death and dying at different points in development and cultural attitudes about the issue. References Berger, K. S. (2008). *The Developing Person Through the Life Span, 7e*. Retrieved from <https://ecampus.phoenix.edu/content/eBookLibrary/content/eReader.h#>. Dying and Death. (2004). In *Encyclopedia of Medical Anthropology: Health and Illness in the World's Cultures*. Retrieved from http://www.credoreference.com.ezproxy.apollolibrary.com/entry/sprmedanth/dying_and_death