

Physical and psychological changes due to the ageing process essay sample

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



Some ageing experiences are different. Some people develop serious problems of ageing but some people have few problems. Ageing can involve the physical changes are:

- * The skin becomes thinner and more wrinkled
- * The person may lose weight
- * Bones become more brittle
- * Muscles become weaker
- * Vision might weaker

Cardiovascular system - the heart pumps blood around the body. The heart can be affected by age. Hypertension, a condition associated with both heart disease and stroke, is more prevalent in older persons. Fatty build up in veins and arteries together with hardening of blood vessels can add to potential for heart disease. Atherosclerosis can result in higher blood pressure and high blood pressure puts the person at risk of strokes (where the blood supply to the brain is blocked) and heart attacks.

Respiratory system - when blood is not being pumped round the body efficiently and may result in breathless. The strength of the chest muscles may reduce with ageing and the lungs might deteriorate. Chronic diseases such as bronchitis may develop. Bronchitis involves swelling of the airways that connect to the windpipe to the lungs. Result to this would be emphysema and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

Emphysema - emphysema is a disease in which the air sacs within the lungs become damaged. This causes shortness of breath and can result in respiratory or heart failure. Emphysema can be induced by smoking which causes the lungs to produce chemicals that damage the walls of the air sacs. In time, this results in a drop in the amount of oxygen in the blood.

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease - when there is an airflow obstruction, perhaps due to emphysema or bronchitis, the resulting condition is described as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). This condition can create a progressively worse disruption of airflow of airflow into the lungs. Some people with COPD increase their breathing in order to cope, whereas others may have a bullish appearance or might look bloated because of a lack of oxygen and a build-up of fluid in the body.

Nervous system - ageing may involve the loss of nerve cells that activate muscles, neurotransmitters the chemicals released by nerves in order to communicate and control muscles may also function less effectively with age. A serious illness that affects older persons is Parkinson's disease. There is a shakiness in the extremities.

Loss of vision - After 45 years of age, the ability of the eye to focus begins to weaken and by 65 years there may be little focusing power left, making small print more difficult to read. Up to half of people over the age of 90 may have serious problems with vision. Cataracts result from changes in the lens of the eye. As people grow older, the lenses can become hard and cloudy. This process stops the lens of the eye from being able to change shape or

transmit light appropriately. This process results in symptoms such as blurred vision. Cataracts may start to form between the ages of 50 and 60 years and often take time to develop. The majority of people over 75 years have some degree of cataract formation. Diabetes can also cause the development of cataracts.

Loss of hearing – Many older people experience difficulty in hearing high frequency (or high pitch) sounds. This can happen because the sensitivity of nerve cells in the inner ear may decrease. There may also be a loss of nerve cells that result in hearing loss. Some older people experience an increase in wax in the outer ear and this can block the transmission of sound to the sensory nerves.

Cognitive changes – Ageing can involve a loss of nerve cells in the brain and a reduction in the effectiveness of nerves to transmit electrical signals. However, this does not mean that people lose their ability to think logically or reason. Many older people do report problems with memory recall, for example, ‘ where did I put my glasses?’

Musculoskeletal – Older people may experience the following:

- * muscle thinning,
- * decline in mobility
- * Arthritis

Arthritis involves damage to joints within the body. A substance called cartilage covers the ends of our bones and helps to 'cushion' our bones as we move. Cartilage can become thinner and less elastic with age.

Skin - As people grow older, the elasticity of the skin reduces. The amount of fat stored under the skin decreases and the appearance of the skin becomes looser and develops wrinkles.

Dementia - Because of ageing, dementia is more likely to occur.

Approximately 5 per cent of people over the age of 65 years have dementia.

The Alzheimer's Society estimates that as many as 20 per cent of people over the age of 80 are affected by dementia. Dementia is a disorder that causes damage to the structure and chemistry of the brain. A person with dementia is likely to experience problems with understanding what is happening around them, communicating, reasoning, finding their way and remembering recent events. There are different kinds of dementia; two major types are Alzheimer's disease and dementia caused by vascular disease, which involves blood supply problems to the brain.

Psychological changes:

As with physical ageing, each person's experience of psychological changes is likely to be different. Some people may disengage from social activity as argued by Cumming (1975) but many people do remain in close contact with friends and family.

Self-confidence - that confidence in undertaking practical tasks decreases in old age but that social confidence increases and that this is one of the contradictions involved in understanding ageing.

Physical illness may cause people to lose confidence in skills that they once had. It would be wrong to assume that physical decline removes confidence in general or in all people.