

Optimal aging in late adulthood

Psychology



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Aging is a process that involves a lot of physical changes, disillusionment and general fear of the unknown. Societies often associate aging with a lot of misconceptions which are hurting to the elderly since it is not their wish to be that old. Furthermore, their physical nature and general body weaknesses calls for a lot of attention from other family members which at times becomes bothersome. Scientists have associated aging with several risk factors such as general breakdown of the immune system of the aging. In addition, there are proves of neurodegenerative diseases such as cerebrovascular disease, Alzheimer's disease, Lou Gehrig's disease and Parkinson's disease (Craik & Salthouse, 2000, p 56). All these changes have been attributed to changes in the chemical, functional and structural composition of the neurocognitive part of the brain. Physically, the adding adults experience general depletion of body tissues and muscles making them weaker and more vulnerable. Aging in adults results in the depletion of the adipose layer just beneath the skin. The loss of the fatty layers and oil glands is a physical condition that causes the skin to become less elastic, delicate and wrinkled. It is a fact that as someone ages, the number of sweat glands and blood vessels supplying blood to the skin decreases. This means that aging people have problems controlling temperature and they have difficulties adapting to new physical environments. Likewise, the bones become weaker and the person becomes fragile and risks fracturing the delicate bones. This is more pronounced in women since their bones are not as enduring as those of men. Then they begin losing height by around three inches because of readjustments in the spinal code. Joints also become less flexible since the ligaments lose

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lubrication making them stiff and painful to move. Moreover, there are hormonal changes in the body that results in the weakening of body tissues and muscles. Body fats increases and this can be detrimental to the elderly if they do not activity participate in physical exercises. Eyesight is also affected as adulthood sets in. The person becomes long sighted and loses the ability to see objects near to them or in dim light. The ears become insensitive and at times their hearing is impaired. On the side of cognitive responses or changes, the brain cells lose their power to memorize and remember things making the aging person to be forgetful. The aging adults often have problems with paying attention, memorizing things and above all they portray low levels of cognitive abilities. Scientists have identified many types of cognitive abilities in human beings for instance; episodic, strategic, semantic, source spatial, non-declarative and semantic memory. The medial temporal lobe is vulnerable to age since it declines with an increase in age beyond a certain level. In addition, cognitive skills are associated with an individual's environment and genetic factors. The human brain shows a tendency to decline in functions due to changes in the gene expression. Such changes may be due to oxidative DNA damages due to promoter genomes and such problems begin at the age of forty years (Armstrong, 2003, p 191). Basing on this scientific explanation, the brains may slow down their processes and lower concentration therefore the aging victim might start taking long to comprehend. As well they may find it cumbersome to put up with the process of learning new tasks. The social-emotional lives of the aging also change for the worse since they need a lot of attention and care during this time of age especially at around 65 years, yet the youths are at the peak of their livelihood hence have more energy to participate in several

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activities. They can hardly offer the attention needed by the aging. As people age, they experience a change in the way they treat their emotions. Mostly the aging has negative emotions such as depression, loneliness, anger, and boredom. They have a really hard time controlling their emotions especially when they are viewing something disgusting heartbreaking images. They become optimistic since they major on looking on the positive side of life and are more empathetic than before. This can be interpreted that as someone ages, they become more attached to emotional feelings since they feel that they are insufficiently catered for when it comes to maintaining personal social relationships with people. One positive way of addressing the problem of low physical strength among the aging is through encouraging them to undertake constant physical exercises which will prevent deposition of fats in the arteries. It would be negative to discriminate the elderly or deny them the much needed care since their bodies are weak and fragile. From the cognitive point of view, it would be encouraging to keep on reminding the aging of appointments and practice keeping up with their slow learning rates. It would be negative to complain of their slowness in responding or thinking since their brains are deficient. On the point of social-emotional change, the youths need to take care of the aging and appreciate them by associating with them at social events. For instance, he or she should be allowed to associate with the grandchildren and probably be provided with a caretaker. It would be negative to discriminate the aging basing on their anti-social behavior and more so their negative emotional perspective. A positive approach in treating the aging should be encouraged. Given the fact that they have taken care of the youths and they have established good families, they deserve a lot of respect. In honoring the aging, the youths

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need to make sure that the aging are provided for so that they have a successful aging. Contrary to successful aging, some youths discriminate against their parents making them to age faster and even hate life since the youths look down upon them. the elderly should not be treated with contempt or segregation because they did their part in making bringing up the youths and at that age, it is favorable if their children gave them a decent sent off or just too time to appreciate them and the role they played in bringing them up. References Armstrong, M. (2003). Is being a grandmother being old? Cross ethnic perspective from New Zealand: Journal of cross-cultural gerontology 18 (3). Craik, F. & Salthouse, T. (2000). The handbook of aging and recognition (2nd Ed.) Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum. Poon, L. & Perls, T. (2006). Annual review of gerontology and geriatrics. New York: Springer Publishing Company.