Healthy Aging for Older Adults in the United States

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Global Aging

The human population is aging.

Percent of the Population Aged 65+ by Region, 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>14.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>North America</td>
<td>12.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>5.9</td>
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Global Aging

The human population is aging.

Percent of the Population Aged 65+ by Region, 2030

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>North America</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
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Global Aging

The human population is aging.

Percent of the Population Aged 65+ by Region, 2050

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
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<td>North America</td>
<td>20.7</td>
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<td>Asia</td>
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Implications of Aging Societies

- Does aging represent a global problem?

- Is it possible to identify and enhance positive aspects of aging?

- What is healthy aging? Is it possible?
Aims

- Definition of Healthy Aging
- Implications for Research and Practice
- New Directions
- Consider these issues within the U.S. context
Important Questions

- What is healthy aging?
- Whom do we ask?
SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT: UNDERSTANDING THE SCIENCE BEHIND SKIN CARE

CHEMICAL PEELS
A Simple Solution to Facial Rejuvenation

SERUM VS. SALIVA
Which is Better for Measuring Hormones?

ALL THAT GLITTERS
Do Medi Spa Franchises Live up to Their Promises?

GINKGO BILoba
Effective Memory Enhancer
GLENN’S MISSION

Last week he began a month of training for his return to space. A gimmick? No, a timely reminder that we can still have heroes.
Successful Aging

- Low risk of disease and disease-related disability.
- High mental and physical function.
- Active engagement with life.

Related Concepts

- Chronological Age vs. Functional Age

Epidemiology

Based on the premise that health outcomes are not distributed randomly in the population.

Describe and explain patterns of health outcomes in populations.
Conceptualization and Measurement of Successful Aging

- Concept assumes some distribution of health and functioning in older populations.

- Concept assumes that “successful aging” is reflected at the upper end of the distribution.
  - Top 20%
  - Top 33%

- Concept assumes that the components of successful aging are clustered.
Measurement of Successful Aging

Top 20% of a summated score based on the following:

- ADL
- Physical functioning (Rosow-Breslau & Nagi items)
- IADL
- Physical exercise

Questions

- What about older people with multiple conditions and limitations who remain engaged in everyday life?

- Among older people diagnosed and treated for specific conditions, why do some survive longer and better than others?

- Is it possible for older adults with multiple health conditions and limitations to age healthfully?
Salutogenesis

The causes of health.

Not only those people at the upper end of the health-disease spectrum, but also those who are able to maintain their health in spite of a high-risk profile.

Healthy Aging: An Expanded Definition?

- Is healthy aging more than individual capacity, number and severity of health conditions, and levels of activity?

- Does this suggest that healthy aging may be more prevalent than originally thought?

- Does this expand our notion of the causes of healthy aging as well as the types of programs and policies to enhance healthy aging?
Healthy aging is the development and maintenance of optimal physical, mental and social well-being and function in older adults.

It is most likely to be achieved when physical environments and communities are safe, and support the adoption and maintenance by individuals of attitudes and behaviors known to promote health and well-being;

And by the effective use of health services and community programs to prevent or minimize the impact of acute and chronic disease on function.
Implications for Research and Practice

Epidemiology of Aging

– Patterns of health and well-being vary by
  – Socioeconomic status
  – Living arrangements
  – Past and current health behaviors
  – Place
Supportive Environment

Is it possible to preserve and promote healthy aging among older adults with reduced capacity through environmental design?
Promotion of walking is an efficient and effective public health strategy to promote and preserve health and functioning in aging populations.
Background

How best to promote walking in older populations?
Objective

Examine to what extent functional capacity and a diverse range of neighborhood elements are associated with level of walking among older adults.
Objective

Examine to what extent elements of the neighborhood environment moderate the association between reduced functional capacity and sedentary behavior among older adults.
Implications

Better understanding of the reasons why some walk and others do not.

Environmental design may contribute to the continuation of walking, especially among older people with reduced lower-body function.
Areas that encourage walking
Areas that discourage walking
Neighborhood Environment

- Potential for affecting large numbers of people now and in the future ("Upstream Perspective")
- Central to a consideration of aging.
Lawton Environmental Theory of Aging

The effects of the environment become more pronounced with age-related declines in health and functioning.

Person-Environment Fit Model
Examples


– Among older people with lower extremity function, those residing in areas with more land-use diversity were more likely to be independent in ADL and IADL than older people with the same lower extremity function but residing in areas with less land-use diversity.
FIGURE 1-- Effect of housing density and land-use diversity on (a) ADL and (b) IADL disability by lower extremity functional limitations

Results

- Elements of the neighborhood environment improve activity among older adults with reduced capacity.

- Suggests that environmental design may enhance activity among adults with age-related limitations.
U.S. Policy implications

The aging population in the U.S. is becoming more racially and ethnically diverse.

- Percent of non-Hispanic white seniors will decline from 83.5% to 64.2% between 2000 and 2050.
U.S. Policy implications

- Regional and geographic diversity.

- Place-based programs that take these factors into account may succeed.
Environmental Interventions

- Environmental Modifications (e.g., land-use diversity and density, sidewalks)

- Environmental Linkage (e.g., “walking maps”, technological innovations)
New Directions

- Multidisciplinary research designs.

- Multidisciplinary research infrastructure
  - Funding Resources
  - Training Programs
Return to our panel of experts
Is Healthy Aging Really Possible?

- Yes, and probably in all of those cases.

- Healthy aging is not one thing.

- Look beyond capacity and consider factors that serve to either impede or enhance health, functioning, and engagement in everyday life.