

Review Article

Successful Aging and Its Effective Factors

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Abstract

Background: Due to the increase in the quality of life of people and access to health care in most communities, the elderly population has increased significantly and becomes a major challenge if not properly planned.

Objective: The purpose of this study is to investigate successful aging and the factors affecting it as a basic solution to reduce the challenges of aging.

Results: The findings of the studies indicate that there are obstacles in the way of achieving successful aging that should be addressed with proper planning by the community and the elderly.

Conclusion: Successful aging has multiple dimensions that it is not possible for most older people to access all of its dimensions. And it may vary from person to person. It is better to plan for achieving a successful old age based on the condition of the elderly, because many older people have chronic illnesses and disabilities. And some of them have a negative attitude towards old age.

Keywords: Aging, Active aging, Elderly, Successful aging

Introduction

The growth of the elderly population has increased in most communities. And it is estimated that by 2050 the world's elderly population will reach 2 billion. As the aging population grows, chronic diseases such as diabetes, high blood pressure and cognitive impairment may increase. One of the solutions for countries to solve this problem is to strengthen successful aging. In this article, a review of successful aging and the factors affecting it has been done [1].

Successful Aging

Defining successful aging is not an easy task. The first definition of successful aging was provided by Ro and Kahn. And this definition includes relief from disease - high physical and cognitive function and no cognitive and neurological disorders - active interaction and life expectancy. These are just some of the definitions above. Successful seniors are people who look older but have the ability to take care of themselves like ordinary seniors [2]. But the problem with this definition is that not all seniors meet all three of these criteria and may be affected by illness and other problems. What is important is that the elderly return to the community after a period of recovery and have the ability to take care of themselves. The best definition that can be given to successful aging is "a combination of active and healthy aging in order to achieve a sense of satisfaction in all aspects of life from the perspective of the elderly." However, all definitions may vary from one elderly person to another.

Stressors and Its Effect on Successful Aging

Sometimes you may see elderly people who are physically, mentally and socially involved without any prior planning and effort. Researchers call such people lucky old people. It seems that despite the elderly man's

efforts, there are variables in his life that lead him to a successful old age. Such as components (income/job/family existence/correct lifestyle/lack of family history of disease, etc.) [3]. But most seniors do not have such conditions and need to know in advance how to cope with stress.

Stressors Include

Chronic illness/Death of loved ones/Social injuries/Incompatibility/Disability/Lack of medical support. To maintain the quality of life of the elderly in stressful processes, this adaptation needs to be done in principle. An elderly person needs internal resources (attitudes-beliefs and individual skills) and external resources (social-therapeutic and economic support) to adapt to stressors [4].

Factors Affecting the Process of Successful Aging and Aging

Aging is a natural phenomenon. After a while, the body's stem cells fail and the aging process begins. But some issues affect the aging process and make it faster or slower. These include economic and social status, as well as lifestyle. Aging happens to everyone, and it is a natural phenomenon, but what is important is to avoid bad aging [5]. They will be briefly reviewed below

A- Social Factors Affecting the Aging Process

- 1- Socio-economic status
- 2- The role of education in life
- 3- Level of physical and cognitive function
- 4- Life arrangement such as high social status or very low social status
- 5- Ethnicity
- 6- A challenging mental and emotional lifestyle

Numerous studies have determined the role of variables of social support, financial strength and literacy level in achieving successful aging. Elderly people who have the support of family, friends and the community have a sufficient level of education and adequate health resources to reach successful aging more easily.

B. Environmental Factors Affecting the Aging Process

- 1- Receive timely and effective medical care
- 2- Maintain a healthy weight and eat healthy
- 3- Getting enough sleep a day and getting enough exercise
- 4- Avoid excessive alcohol consumption, smoking and other unhealthy habits
- 5- Social relationships and intellectual challenges
- 6- Maintain a positive attitude towards life
- 7- Avoid stress and depression

Longevity and quality of life are also largely determined by what a person does to maintain their physical and mental health. Examples of this may include the above. In fact, successful aging is the result of actions that people take at a young age. Some environmental factors can be adjusted and eliminated and some of them are not preventable [6]. The goal is to reduce environmental risk factors as much as possible so that they have fewer side effects. Elderly people who are obese, smoke, do not have access to health care, do not have a positive outlook on life, and are more likely to have difficulty achieving successful aging.

Lifelong Intervention Strategies

As people reach old age, many of them experience feelings of worthlessness, diminished social well-being, loneliness, depression, fear of death, and the end of life. As a result, they make fewer efforts to maintain physical and mental health. A number of solutions have been suggested that can be helpful.

Participate in Volunteer Work

Make sure the elderly person engages in challenging activities throughout the day, rather than watching TV or watching movies. This may include traveling to interesting places, visiting various malls, presenting challenging games or puzzles, volunteering, and providing opportunities to participate in the community.

Give them responsibility for caring for pets such as dogs, cats or birds. In addition, let them take care of the plants if possible. This strategy is often used in nursing homes to reduce depression in the elderly and actually improve their health, and it is really effective [7].

If the caregiver of an elderly person is unable to attend these steps, arrange for a nurse or therapist to be present. The work given to the elderly must be able to be done, otherwise it will not have a good result.

Educating the Elderly for Successful Aging

Teach the basics of social media. Facebook and Instagram are great ways for seniors to connect with family and stay up-to-date on communities and the world.

Provide opportunities for the elderly to interact, educate children such as grandchildren or children in a day care center. This is a very effective strategy to help older people who feel they have a meaningful existence. And it has a great effect on improving and maintaining their health [8].

Presence of the elderly in school alongside other young people in order to use the two-way experience and reduce the intergenerational gap. Building **aging schools** and gathering the elderly in one place can greatly meet their social needs.

The Effect of Healthy Nutrition and Exercise on Successful Aging

Design or organize an exercise program and provide a way to encourage older people to follow it. Know your nutritional needs, especially your need for vitamins and minerals, including iron. Get some books on the subject or get help from the internet.

Make sure the person takes care of themselves and eats properly. Eating special meals, serving delicious food, eating out or having dinner can be fun and exciting for anyone regardless of age. Many older people neglect their nutrition. Improper nutrition can cause a variety of mental and physical problems in the elderly. Some seniors suffer from malnutrition due to oral problems and caregivers should consider these.

Helping to Improve Their Feelings and Relationships and Successful Aging

Make sure that an elderly person has the opportunity to look beautiful and have beautiful clothes. Make sure the person goes out in public and tries to eat or attend a public event and feel good about their appearance [6].

Also, involve your elderly loved ones in important family discussions. Give them the opportunity to share their ideas and experiences with you as you make financial, life, education and job decisions.

The Movement of the Elderly towards Active Aging

According to the definition of active aging, which is the process of turning opportunities into health, participation and security in order to increase the quality of life of the elderly, community leaders should provide facilitation programs to achieve this. One of these solutions is the Age-friendly city, which is very effective in achieving active aging and subsequent successful aging [5].

The Movement of the Elderly towards Healthy Aging

WHO defines healthy ageing as “the process of developing and maintaining the functional ability that enables wellbeing in older age.” Functional ability is about having the capabilities that enable all people to be and do what they have reason to value [9] This includes a person’s ability to:

- 1- Meet their basic needs;
- 2- Learn, grow and make decisions;
- 3- Be mobile;
- 4- Build and maintain relationships
- 5- Contribute to society.

Another way to achieve successful aging is to move towards healthy aging. These concepts have multiple dimensions and need to be planned based on the abilities of the elderly. Because general planning, regardless of the circumstances of the elderly, leads to failure [10].

Conclusion

Successful aging has multiple dimensions that it is not possible for most older people to access all of its dimensions. And it may vary from person to person. It is better to plan for achieving a successful old age based on the condition of the elderly, because many older people have chronic illnesses and disabilities. And some of them have a negative attitude towards old age.

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