

## Exam 1

### The Demography of Aging: Challenges & Opportunities

**Young-old:** 55-85

**Oldest old:** 85 and older

**Centenarians:** 100 years old and over

**Chronological age:** calendar age

**Perceived age:** age you think of yourself as

**Biological age:** the functioning of your vital systems (what physical activities you can still do)

**Psychological age:** the functioning of psychological abilities (can you do the things society expects you to do given your age)

**Factors responsible for increases in life expectancy:**

- Reduction in acute disease (because of advances in medical and public health)
- Reduction in infant mortality
- Reduction in female mortality at child birth
- Treatment advances in chronic diseases (medical and lifestyle)

**Cohort:** A group of people who were born in the same year

**Population aging:** term for shifts in the age distribution of the population towards older ages

- We are shifting from a pyramid shape to a rectangle shape
- Older people are living longer now than they used to so we have almost as many older people living as we do younger

**Factors related to the changing age structure of the US:**

- Increase in average life expectancy
- Change in immigration patterns
- Change in fertility patterns across cohorts

**Implications of changing age structure (population aging):**

- Medical and technological advances/challenges
  - Predicted increase in long-term care services in the future
  - Multiple chronic conditions (heart disease, cancer, diabetes, Alzheimer's disease) and high disability rates
- Changing family structure & caregiving
  - Fewer children mean fewer caregivers
  - Changes in divorce population
- Evolving social insurance systems
  - Age to be eligible for social security is rising
  - **Dependency ratio:** Proportion of employed to dependent portions of population
- New role for older adults
  - They have TIME to help fulfill society's needs

### Ageism: Myths and Stereotypes about Aging

**Ageism:** Systematic stereotyping of and discrimination against people because they are old, similar to racism and sexism (this is an inappropriate negative treatment)

- Attitudinal (stereotypes and beliefs) and behavioral (discrimination)

### Factors that form the theoretical basis of ageism:

- Fear of death in western society
- Emphasis on youth culture
- Emphasis on productivity
- Manner in which aging originally researched

**New Ageism:** Tendency to help older adults because all older people must need help

### Outcomes of Ageism:

- Isolation from the community
- Inadequate housing and income
- Unnecessary institutionalized
- Untreated mental and physical illnesses

### Examples of ageism:

- In the media: Older adults remain underrepresented in films and on TV, anti-aging ads (cause pressure to hide signs of aging) and gender in the media (women focus on appearance and men focus on performance)
- In family relationships: Interacting with family members can be demoralizing to older adults and too much care can promote excessive dependency
- In the health care system: physicians limit the number of older patients, they are poorly reimbursed and their concerns are often trivialized ("that everything is okay and that they are just feeling that way because they are getting old")
- In employment: older workers are perceived as disinterested in promotion, less flexible, expensive for the organization and slow learners
- In social policies: criticized as benefiting the old at the expense of the young (healthcare utilization- social security and Medicare and education policies- mostly focus on young people)

### Ways to combat ageism:

- Cite ageism so others can see that it is a problem
- Formal education and continuing education
- Needs-based vs. age-based programs
- Build intergenerational programs; coalitions

### Life-Span Development and Research Methods:

#### Key Points in the lifespan developmental theory:

- Paul Baltes said that abilities develop over your whole life
- **Multidirectional:** characterized by both growth and loss (ex: as our vocabulary increases our processing speed decreases)
- **Plasticity:** Degree development is modifiable (ex: memory loss-we can intervene and slow it down when we know it is a possible problem)
- **Historical Context:** historical events/trends influence development
- **Multiple Causation:** biology, cognition, emotion and social relationships and interactions

#### Developmental Influence:

- **Age-graded influences:** Occurs in a similar way to most people in a particular age group (ex: menopause, graduating high school, voting)

- **History-graded influences:** Occurs in a similar way to most people in a particular cohort or generation (ex: usage of the internet, 9/11)
- **Non-normative influences:** Unusual events that are unique to an individual (ex: winning the lottery, death of a family member, divorce)

**Experimental Studies:** Interventions that have an experimental group, a control group, an independent variable and a dependent variable

- Used to study memory and to see the correlation of two variables
- Correlation does NOT equal causation! Just because one thing happened does not mean another thing will

**Cross-Sectional Studies:** Several groups of different aged people studied at one point in time

- Allows us to study age difference
- Advantage: less costly to conduct
- Disadvantage: confound age and cohort (people born during the same year have similar experiences through life)

**Longitudinal Studies:** Allows you to see how things change with age by studying one group of same aged people at different points over time

- Allows us to study age changes
- Advantages: gives the most accurate results
- Disadvantages: time, cost and subject attrition (people dropping out of the study for specific reasons)

**Ways to Obtain Information:**

- Questionnaire/Self-report
  - People best report their own behavior, but they also may say what they think people want to hear or may not remember if it was from a long time ago
- Systematic Observations
  - Captures behavior that the person could be unaware of, but there could be observer bias
  - This study is often used on infants since they cannot talk
- Physiological Measures
  - Recording characteristics and responses (ex: height, blood pressure, hormone levels)
  - This can be used to tell us peoples stress levels

**Draw two smiley faces next to the bonus question**