

A warm welcome to this class on physical development during late adulthood.

I'll be speaking on sensory development. I'm assistant professor Elvira. From the Department of Psychology, St. Xavier's College, Mapusa.

I'll be focusing on sensory development during late adulthood. The student will be able to gain an insight into the development of the senses during late adulthood.

3. Smell and Taste:

Most older adults lose some of their sense of smell or taste or both.

These losses begin around 60 years of age.

A majority of individuals 80 years of age and older experience a significant reduction in smell.

Older adults show a greater decline in their sense of smell than in their taste.

Smell and taste decline less in healthy adults than in their less healthy counterparts.

Reductions in the ability to smell and taste can reduce enjoyment of food and life satisfaction.

Also a decline in the sense of smell can reduce the ability to detect smoke from a fire.

However older adults compensate for their diminished taste and smell by eating sweeter, spicier and saltier food which can lead to eating more low nutrient, highly seasoned "junk food".

4. Touch and Pain

Changes in touch and pain are also associated with aging.

Research indicates that aging individuals detect touch less in the lower extremities (ankles, knees, and so on) than in the upper extremities (wrists, shoulder, and so on).

For most older adults a decline in touch sensitivity is not problematic.

Older adults are less sensitive to pain and suffer from it less than younger adults.

The Circulatory System and Lungs:

Cardiovascular disorders increase in late adulthood.

Most experts on aging even recommend that consistent blood pressure above 120/80 should be treated to reduce the risk of heart attack, stroke, or kidney disease.

A rise in blood pressure with age can be linked with illness, obesity, stiffening of blood vessels, stress or lack of exercise.

Various drugs, healthy diet and exercise can reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease in older adults.

Lung capacity drops 40% between the ages of 20 and 80, even without disease.

Lungs lose elasticity, the chest shrinks and the diaphragm weakens.

Older adults can improve lung functioning with diaphragm strengthening exercises.

Sexuality

Sexuality can be lifelong.

Aging however does induce some changes in human sexual performance more in the male than in the female.

Orgasm becomes less frequent in males with age, occurring in every second to third attempt rather than every time.

More direct stimulation is needed to produce an erection.

Sexual activity did decline through the later years of life.

Various therapies for older adults who report sexual difficulties have been effective.

In one study, simply giving sex education which consisted largely of simply giving sexual information led to increased sexual interest, knowledge and activity in older adults.

Even when intercourse is impaired by infirmity other relationship needs persist among them closeness, sensuality and being valued as a man or a woman.

Health Problems

As we age the probability increases that we will have some disease or illness.

The majority adults still alive at 80 years of age or older are likely to have some type of impairment.

Chronic diseases (those with a slow onset and a long duration) are rare in early adulthood, increase in middle adulthood and become more common in late adulthood.

Arthritis is the most common chronic disorder in late adulthood, followed by hypertension.

Adults over the age of 65 often have a physical impairment, many of them can still carry on their everyday activities or work.

Chronic conditions associated with the greatest limitation on work are heart conditions (52%), diabetes (34%), asthma (27%) and arthritis (27%).

Conflict in relationships has been linked with greater decline in older adults with diabetes or hypertension.

Low income is also strongly related to health problems in late adulthood.

Recent studies document links between low socioeconomic status and health problems.

Causes of death in older Adults

Nearly 60% of U.S adults 65 to 74 years old die of cancer or cardiovascular disease.

Cancer is now the leading cause of death among 65 to 74 year olds.

However in the age groups 75 to 84 and 85 and over cardiovascular disease still is the leading cause of death.

Ethnicity is linked with the death rates for older adults.

Among ethnic groups in the United States, African Americans have high death rates for stroke, heart disease, lung cancer and female breast cancer.

b) Arthritis:

Arthritis is an inflammation of the joints accompanied by pain, stiffness, and movement problems.

Arthritis is especially common in older adults.

This disorder can affect hips, knees, ankles, fingers and vertebrae.

Individuals with arthritis often experience pain and stiffness, as well as problems in moving about and performing routine daily activities.

There is no known cure for arthritis.

However the symptoms of arthritis can be reduced by drugs such as aspirin, range - of -motion exercises for the joints, weight reduction and in extreme cases replacement of the crippled joint with a prosthesis.

c) Osteoporosis:

Normal aging brings some loss of bone tissue but in some instances loss of bone tissue can become severe.

Osteoporosis involves an extensive loss of bone tissue.

Women are especially vulnerable to osteoporosis, the leading cause of broken bones in women.

Approximately 80% of osteoporosis cases in the United States occur in females, 20% in males.

Almost two thirds of all women over the age of 60 are affected by osteoporosis.

It is more common in the non-Latino White, thin and small framed women.

Osteoporosis is related to deficiencies in calcium, Vitamin D, estrogen and lack of exercise.

To prevent osteoporosis young and middle aged women should eat foods rich in calcium (such as dairy products, broccoli, turnip greens and kale), get more exercise and avoid smoking.

d) Accidents: accidents are the sixth leading cause of death among older women.

Injuries resulting from a fall at home or during a traffic accident in which an older adult is a driver or an older pedestrian is hit by a vehicle are common.

Falls are the leading cause of injury deaths among adults who are 65 years and older.

Each year approximately 200,000 adults over the age of 65 (most of them women) fracture a hip in a fall.

Half of these older adults die within 12 months, frequently from pneumonia.

Because healing and recuperation are slower in older adults, an accident that is only a temporary setback for a younger person may result in long term hospital or home care for an older adult.
