





Lifespan Psychology PSY 210

Chapter 17: Physical And Cognitive Development In Late Adulthood




Outline/Overview

- Theories of aging
- Physical issues in late adulthood
 - Alzheimer's disease
- Cognitive development in late adulthood




Must We Age and Die?

- **Physiological Theories of Aging**
 - Wear and Tear Theory
 - Aging by Program
 - Homeostatic Imbalance
 - Cross-Linkage Theory
 - Accumulation of metabolic waste
 - Autoimmunity
 - Accumulation of errors
- **Genetic Theories of Aging**
- **Effects of the Natural Environment on Aging**
- **Other Modifiers of Aging**




Physical Development

- **Reaction Time Slows Down**
- **Sensory Abilities Decline**
 - Vision
 - Hearing
 - Smell & Taste
- **Other Body Systems Become Weaker**
 - Skeletal system
 - Skin
 - Teeth




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Physical Development

- **Other Body Systems Become Weaker**
 - Hair
 - Gastric system
 - Locomotion slows down
- **Health**
 - Major cause of death is heart disease
 - Alcoholism
 - Prostate cancer
 - Alzheimer's disease



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Alzheimer's Disease

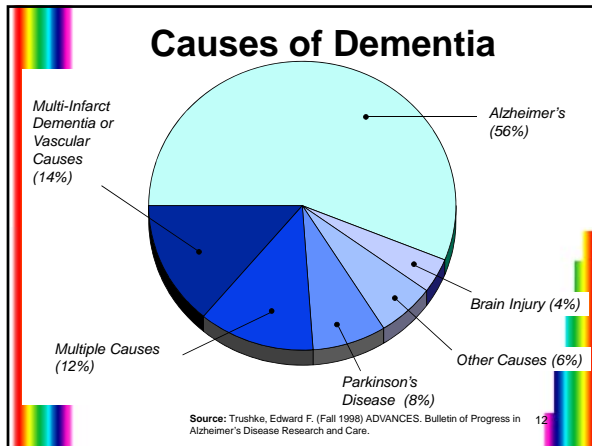
Stages of Progressive Dementia

Over a 6 to 20 year period:

- **General Forgetfulness** – losing keys, eyeglasses, forgetting names and appointments
- **Forgetfulness More Intense and Prevalent** – become repetitive, confused, unable to concentrate. Dysphasic.
- **Dangerous Stage** – getting lost, dressing inappropriately, forgetting to eat, forgetting to turn off the stove.
- **Totally Confused and Disoriented** – doesn't recognize spouse or family members. Cannot control body functions. Requires full-time care.



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Alzheimer's Disease

- Affects 4 million Americans.
- 14 million predicted to have it by 2050
- 1 out of 10 people over 65 have Alzheimer's.
- 1 out of 2 over 85 have it.
- Costs over \$100 billion annually in health care and related costs.
- Definitive diagnosis only on autopsy, with findings of plaques and tangles in the brain cortex.
- No known cure.

Cognitive Development

- **Cognitive Ability in the Elderly: Tests versus Observations**
 - Differences in type of cognition
 - Differences in the representativeness of the individuals or observations
 - Different standards of evaluation
 - Different amounts of experience
- **Creativity**
 - Quantity of creative production drops, but quality of production does not
- **Wisdom**
 - An expert knowledge system concerning the fundamental pragmatics of life (Baltes and Staudinger, 2000)
