

Retirement Village Association Annual Conference

Successful Ageing

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Aged Care Commissioner**



Office of the Aged Care Commissioner

Vision:

To be a recognised leader in complaints management and public administration

Mission :

Through an effective office of review improve the quality of aged care services by promoting excellence in complaint handling and public administration



Legislated Role of the Aged Care Commissioner

- Examine, on appeal, decisions of the Aged Care Complaints Investigation Scheme (the Scheme)
- Examine complaints
- Initiate own motion investigations
- Provide advice to the Minister



Successful Ageing

Successful Ageing...
What does the research say?



Successful Ageing

- Overview of the Ageing of the Population
- What is Successful Ageing?
- Characteristics of Successful Agers



The Ageing of the Population

- By the end of the 20th century, the global population aged over 60 years was approximately 600 million
- In only 25 years, this number will double and by 2025 there will be 1200 million people in this age group



The Ageing of the Population

- The number of Australians over 65 years of age has increased by 67% in the last 20 years



The Ageing of the Population

- In terms of workforce growth – in 2002 the working age population currently grew by around 170,000 per year
- By the decade of the 2020's, that increase will drop to an average of less than 13,000 per year if current trends continue



The Ageing of the Population

- Australia first set the retirement age in 1909, at 65 years of age
- The average life expectancy for the Australian male was 58
- If public policy had kept pace with medical advances and the increase in life expectancy, by the year 2000 our retirement age would have been around 80!



The Ageing of the Population

- The increase in lifespan was one of the triumphs of the 20th century
- In the 20th century, we gained 30 years in life-expectancy
- This increase in lifespan over the past 100 years was greater than that attained in the previous 5,000 years of human history



The Ageing of the Population

‘Retire to Live’ Reality
vs
‘Retire to Die’ Mentality

Investing for quality of life and health
beyond retirement is a new essential in
the 21st century



The Ageing of the Population

- We know much about people who are old and sick
- We know much less about those who are old and well
- Until the 1970's most research into ageing looked at negative impacts such as disease and cognitive decline
- There is now research emerging on the positive impacts on ageing



The Ageing of the Population

- The emerging research is overwhelming in its evidence that a positive approach and investment in ageing well can improve the quality and the quantity of later years
- The WHO states that the challenge is to decrease the period of morbidity at the end of the lifespan



The Ageing of the Population

LEB

Life Expectancy at Birth

Australia: 80.4 years
Male: 77.9
Female: 83.0

HALE

Healthy Life Expectancy (Health Adjusted Life Expectancy)

Australia: 72.6
Male: 70.9
Female: 74.3

Lifespan lost to ill-health:

Australia: 9.7%
Male: 9.0%
Female: 10.5%

WHO 2003



Successful Ageing

What is Successful Ageing?



Successful Ageing

Definitions of Ageing:

- The progressive impairment in functional ability due to the biochemical failure of maintenance & repair of cells
- Ageing occurs when the loss of cells exceeds repair and replacement capacity
- There are no genes that specifically cause ageing or death



Successful Ageing

Cell senescence

- Cells divide and reproduce
- Number of times is understood to be finite
- End of division capability is called senescence
- Ageing occurs when cell replacement and repair is exceeded by senescence



Successful Ageing

Is there a maximum length of life?

- In almost every species there is a pattern for lifespan, being approximately six times the length between birth and maturity
- The accepted maximum lifespan for humans is 120 years



Successful Ageing

*“No one is terrified about growing old
in itself, but the terror is in
becoming clinically dependant”*

**Prof. Suresh Rattan, DSc, PhD. Research Professor,
University of Aarhus, Denmark**



Successful Ageing

*“Successful Ageing is defined as
the ability to maintain:*

- 1. low risk of disease or disability,*
- 2. high mental & physical function,*
- 3. active engagement with life*

MacArthur Foundation Study



Successful Ageing

Characteristic #1

Maintaining Low Risk of
Disease & Disability



Maintaining Low Risk of Disease & Disability

Many of the chronic diseases of mature age are preceded by signs (albeit silent signs) eg:

increase in blood pressure

- increase in BMI or abdominal fat
- blood sugar increase
- decrease in function of lung, kidneys
- decrease in bone density & muscle mass



Maintaining Low Risk of Disease & Disability

These signs of ageing are often accepted as 'usual' in the mature individual.

However, research has now established that these 'usual' conditions are caused in large part by our pathology – how we live – and not by our biology – our genes



Maintaining Low Risk of Disease & Disability

Emerging research data concludes:

- As we grow older, the influence of environmental factors on our health become more important, and the influence of genetic factors becomes less important
- Our course in older age is not predetermined as we have previously understood it



Successful Ageing

Characteristic #2

Maintaining Physical
&
Cognitive Function



Maintaining Physical Function

The steady decline of
physical strength and fitness
as we age
is no longer accepted as inevitable



The 1% Rule

- Medical scientists have previously agreed that after age 25, we lose 1% per year in aerobic capacity, strength, speed and other physical attributes
- It is now increasingly clear that it doesn't have to be that way
- The 1% rule applies only to those who lead a sedentary life



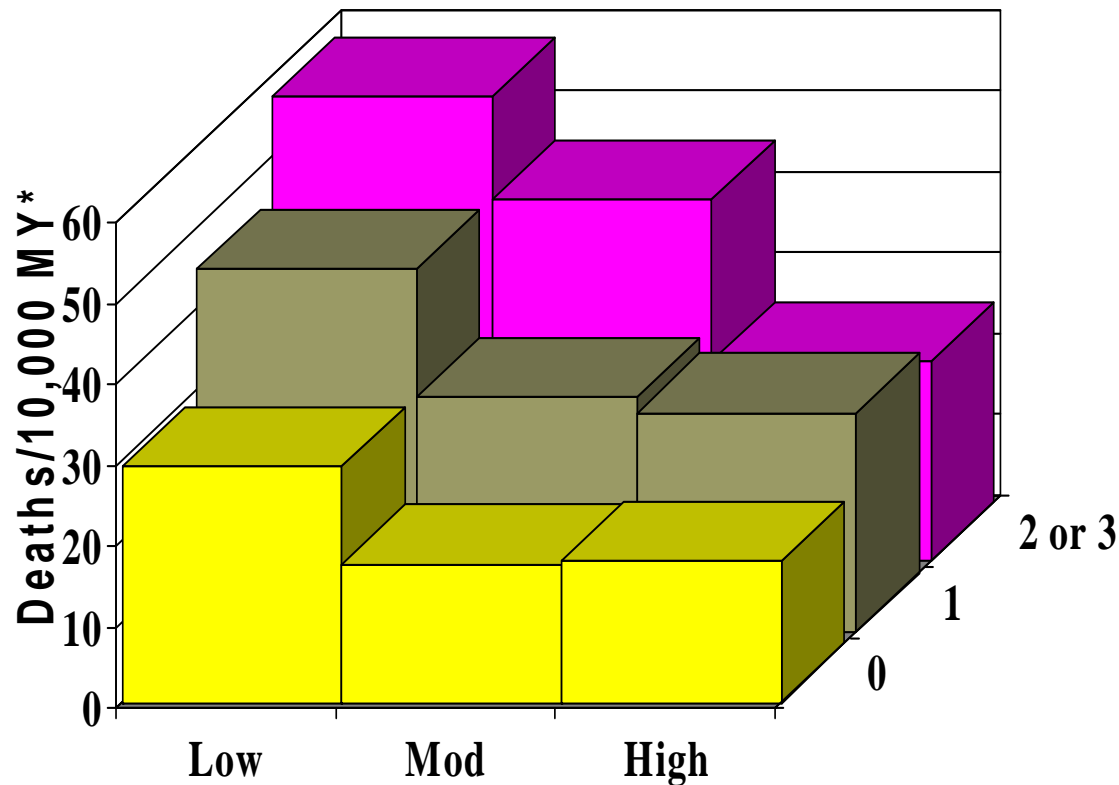
Maintaining Physical Function

- Physical activity is at the crux of successful ageing, regardless of other factors
- Couch potatoes are now being grouped with cigarette smokers as taking their lives in their own hands

MacArthur Foundation Study



Cardio Respiratory Fitness, Risk Factors and All-Cause Mortality, Men, ACLS



of risk factors

Risk Factors

current smoking
SBP ≥ 140 mmHg
Chol ≥ 240 mg/dl

*Adjusted for age, exam year, and other risk factors

Steven Blair, Cooper Inst, Dallas Texas



Maintaining Physical Function

The dominant effect of fitness over other risk factors, and its apparent effect as an antidote for other risk factors, makes physical fitness perhaps the single most important thing an older person can do to remain healthy

MacArthur Foundation Study



Maintaining Cognitive Function

The Facts:

- Cognitive ability is not one function
- Research indicates 2 areas of change in cognitive performance as we age:
 - Speed of processing information
 - Certain types of memory



Cognitive function

- The function of the brain is not well understood
- The brain contains 100 billion neurons and 100 trillion synapses
- Early indications are that neuron pathways (synapses) break down, and 'detours' may be used
- The use of detours may be the reason for increased time & decreased efficiency of processing information



Cognitive Function

- Explicit memory is affected with ageing, ie. memory which involves the intention to remember & the subsequent ability to recall information on demand
- Research shows other kinds of memory show little change in capacity with age



Cognitive Function

- More than 50% of decline of cognitive function in older age is determined by genetic factors (more than other functions)
- However, this still leaves considerable influence for lifestyle factors



Cognitive Function

Research has established the following as direct contributors to maintaining cognitive function:

- Learning
- Physical Activity
- Self-Efficacy
- Complex Environments
- Mild Stress
- Nutrition



Maintaining Cognitive Function

- Education is the strongest predictor of all of retained cognitive function
- Education may have a direct benefit on brain circuitry
- Learning throughout the life-course is essential for continued cognitive function



Maintaining Cognitive Function

Cognitive Training Programs for Older Adults:

A NIA 2 hours per week, 5 week cognitive training program achieved improvements that counteracted the degree of cognitive decline over a 7 – 14 year period

- Improvements remained 2 years later



Successful Ageing

Characteristic #3

Maintaining Meaningful
Engagement



Maintaining Meaningful Engagement

The Importance of Connectedness

Research establishes there are
associations between social relations and
health ...



Maintaining Meaningful Engagement

1. Isolation is a powerful risk factor for poor health
2. Social support directly, positively affects health
3. No single type or form of support fits everybody



Maintaining Meaningful Engagement

The two essentials for meaningful engagement are:

1. Close personal relationships with family and friends
2. Involvement in productive activity

Freud's '*love and work*'



Maintaining Meaningful Engagement

Social & Emotional Richness:

Harvard, Yale & Rush Institute for Healthy Ageing found that social and productive activities are as effective as fitness activities in lowering the risk of death.

Research suggests social and/or productive activity may confer survival benefits through psychosocial pathways

(Glass et al)



Maintaining Meaningful Engagement

The Berlin Study on Ageing sought to identify key contributors to positive ageing

One of the most consistent factors was 'having a reason to get out of bed in the morning'



Successful Ageing

Ageing does not prescribe decline as we have previously understood it

Recent research has shown that only 30% of physical ageing can be traced to our genes – the rest is down to our lifestyle choices



Successful Ageing

“Changes that a doctor or scientist once might have labelled an inevitable part of growing older are now considered pathology not biology.”

Harvard Medical School Report, 2001

