



**Living Long Living Well:
Navigating Through The Healthcare System**

**Aging Adult Services at Stanford
Rita Ghatak, PhD**





**Section 1: Promise of Longevity
and the Importance of
Geriatric Care**



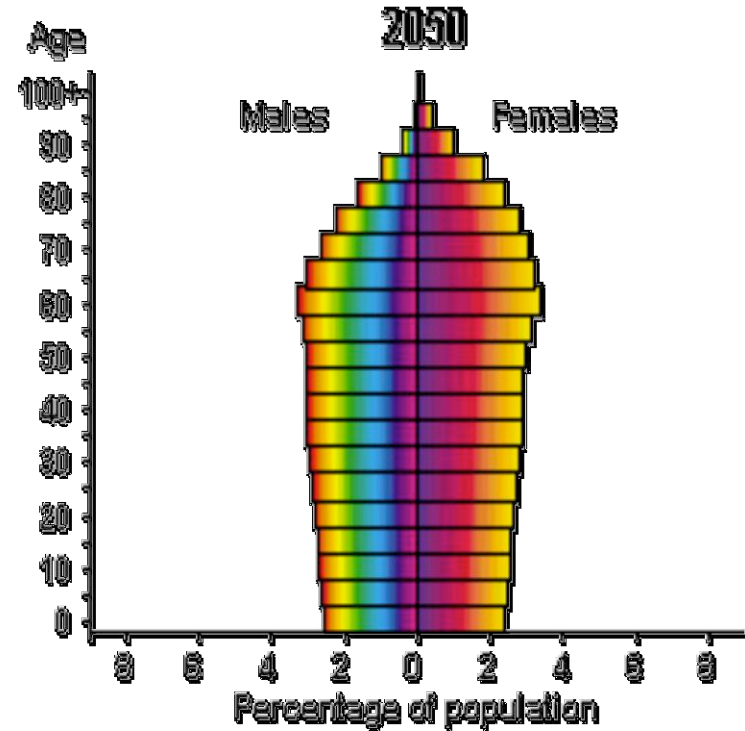
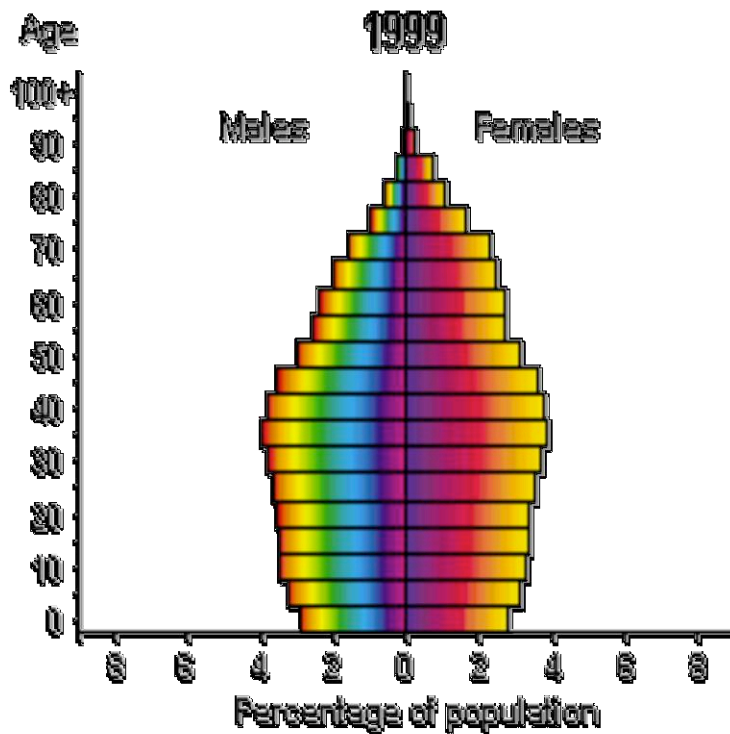
Thought for the Day

Eubie Blake, who lived to be 102 said, ‘If I had known I was going to live so long, I would have taken better care of myself.’



Staggering Demographic Shift Worldwide

- 2003 UN ASSEMBLY ON AGING



The Public Health Crisis

- **Dramatic growth in aging population**
- **Major direct and indirect impact on health service use and costs**
- **Under-investment in knowledge, services, research to meet the future need**

Despite What Our Youth Oriented Culture Tells Us

- **Brain gets stronger**
- **Emotional health gets better**
- **H.O.P.E is the answer**
- **H-health**
- **O-Optimism**
- **P-Planning**
- **E-Engagement**



When We Plan Treatment Options

- **More older adults will be living alone, increasing from 10.9% in 2005 to 15.2% in 2020**
- **The aging population will be more diverse**
- **More older adults will have co-morbid (multiple) conditions**
- **Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (2007).**

Keeping Ourselves Healthy

77 million baby boomers will be senior citizens in the next 10 years, and 1/3 of older adults have some form of immobility and loss of independence!!

“We need to keep ourselves healthy and independent longer, it will greatly impact our treatment, health care costs and quality of life.”

- Peter Z. Cohen, M.D., Founding Director of Senior Sports

Challenges To Healthy Aging

- **Too many medications**
- **Access and Screening**
- **Diabetes**
- **Falls**
- **Obesity**
- **Adults over age 65 represent 12% of the population, consume 1/3 of healthcare services, and occupy 1/2 of all physician time.**

Older Women and Health

- **Living longer**
- **Heart disease**
- **Osteoporosis**
- **Long term care issues – financial vulnerability**
- **Depression, dementia**

What is Geriatrics?

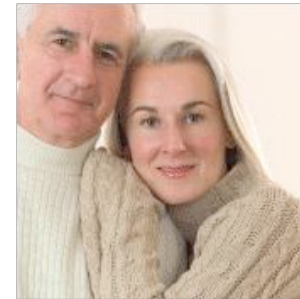
- **Geriatrics focuses on prevention, health promotion, and treatment of disease and disability in later life.**
- **A geriatrician is a physician trained to manage the unique and multiple health concerns of older adults.**
- **Only a few of the 650,000 medical doctors/nurses in practice today receive the necessary training and education in geriatrics.**

A Geriatric Overview is Essential to:

- **Provide better support for assessing multi-system, age-specific needs.**
- **“Look at the big picture.”**
- **Assist navigation between disciplines.**
- **Recognize health changes, vulnerability, treatment, rehabilitation, care vs. cure, and lifestyle changes.**
- **Understand care in long-term care institutions, end-of-life and palliative care.**

In Response to the Emerging Needs of Aging Adults....

**“Aging Adult Services at Stanford”
was created to meet the needs of
aging adults and their families and
create best practices in the hospital.**



A Unique Program in the United States

Out-patient/Home Setting - Preventive disease specific education, family support, and specialty referrals.

In-Patient - Care coordination, consultations, linkages to relevant community resources, in-patient navigation, and supportive discharge planning.

Clinic Setting/Home Visits - Geriatric Consultations.

Aging Adult Services - Programs & Services

Geriatric Health Services - Assessments/Consults

Geriatric Clinic

Strong for Life/Partners in Caring

Dementia Support Program

Caregiver Support Program

Chronic Disease Self Management


Medication Assessment Program

Advance Directives


Checking-In

Lifeline

Vial of Life



Section 2: Movement is a medicine for creating change in a person's physical, emotional, and mental states. - Carol Welch



New Research Trends

- **Decline involves three major factors: cognitive function, loss of lean muscle mass, and the loss of bone mineral density - Dr. Wright.**
- **Research: Effects of exercise on bone mineral density, lean muscle mass, neurocognitive function.**
- **Sedentary lifestyle attributed to high morbidity, chronic illness, and chronic diseases managed by 30 minutes of daily exercise**

Exercise....

- **Improves cognitive function**
- **Reduces the risk of heart disease**
- **Delays onset of diabetes**
- **Improves blood pressure**
- **Alleviates depression and enhances mood**
- **Enhances muscle function and physical performance in elderly (osteoporosis)**
- **Reduces risk of fall**

Exercise....

- **Exercise stimulates the body's production of certain molecules called growth factors, which help nerves stay healthy and keep functioning**
- **Promotes increased blood flow to the brain**

A man's health can be judged by which
he takes two at a time – pills or stairs. –
Joan Welsh



**Despite their remarkable athletic achievements,
athletes are not immune to chronic illness, just
better in coping.**



**Performance declines around age 75...best time
for preventive intervention.**



Exercise and Independence:

“Regular exercise can retard the physiological effects of aging by as much as 50%, and can mean the difference between independence and needing assistance.”

**- Vonda J. Wright, MD, University of Pittsburgh, Dir
(Performance and Research Initiative for Masters Athletes).**



Section 3:

Looking at the Complex
Needs of Older Adults



Hospital Admissions

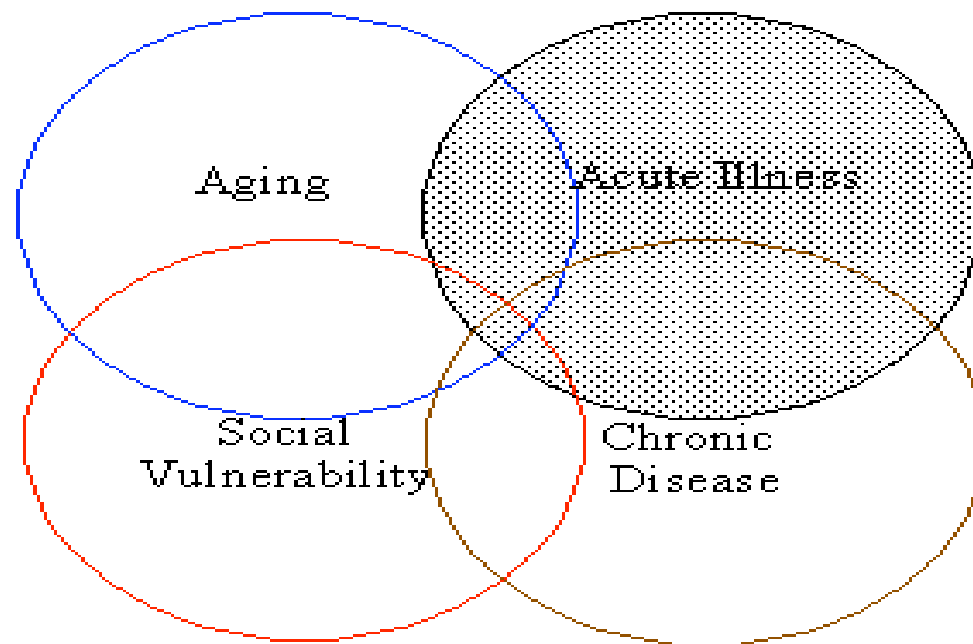
Aging does NOT equate sickness. 90 year olds can sometimes be as healthy & vibrant as 60 year olds...

Scheduled admissions for aging adults represent 23% of all admissions, while unscheduled admissions account for 77%.

At Stanford Hospital in 2007-2008: 37.6% of admissions and 42.5% of the Emergency Room visits were made by older adults.

A Dynamic Health Model

Interaction of Aging, Environment and Disease



F.Rockwood, RA Fox, P Stolee, D Robertson, BL ... - CMAJ: Canadian Medical Association Journal, 1994

Model of Frailty – A Balance Between Assets & Deficits

1. Health
2. Attitudes towards health & health practices
3. Resources
4. Caregiver



1. Illness
2. Disability
3. Dependence on others
4. Burden on caregiver

Brocklehurst JC (ed): The day hospital. In Textbook of Geriatric Medicine and Gerontology. 3rd ed, Churchill. London, Engl. 1985: 982-995

Multiple Medications

- **30% use 5 or more prescription medications.**
- **Older adults make about 175,000 ER visits annually for adverse drug events.**
- **Concurrent use of prescription & non-prescription medications in older adults remains a public health problem.**
 - JAMA. 2008; 300[24]:2867-2878



Gaps in Transitional Care



“Lack of support during care transitions negatively impacts health, prolong hospital stays, require “specialty care”, and increase burden on caregivers and family.”

- The Counseling Psychologist, Vol. 12, No. 2, 17-28 (1984)

Older adults are especially vulnerable during care transitions.

The Emergency Room

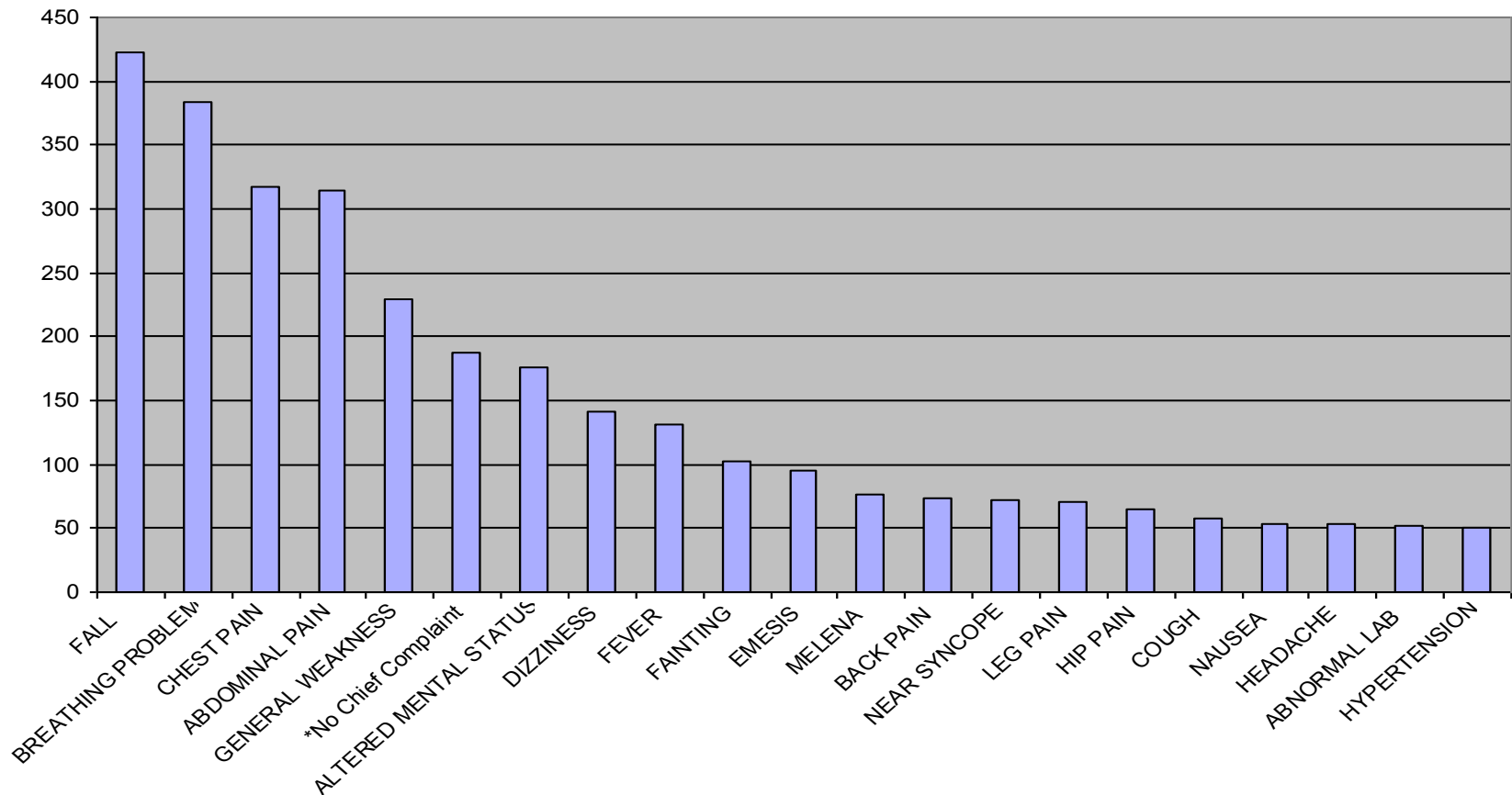
- **Are ER's becoming primary care sites?**
- **What predicts ER visits after hospital stay?**
- **Long waits and multiple-testing.**
- **What predicts frequent ER visits?**



"The results of your tests were negative. Get lost!"

Reasons for Coming to the Emergency Room

LIST OF HIGH VOLUME COMPLAINTS FOR ED GERIATRIC PATIENTS (Jul-Dec 09)



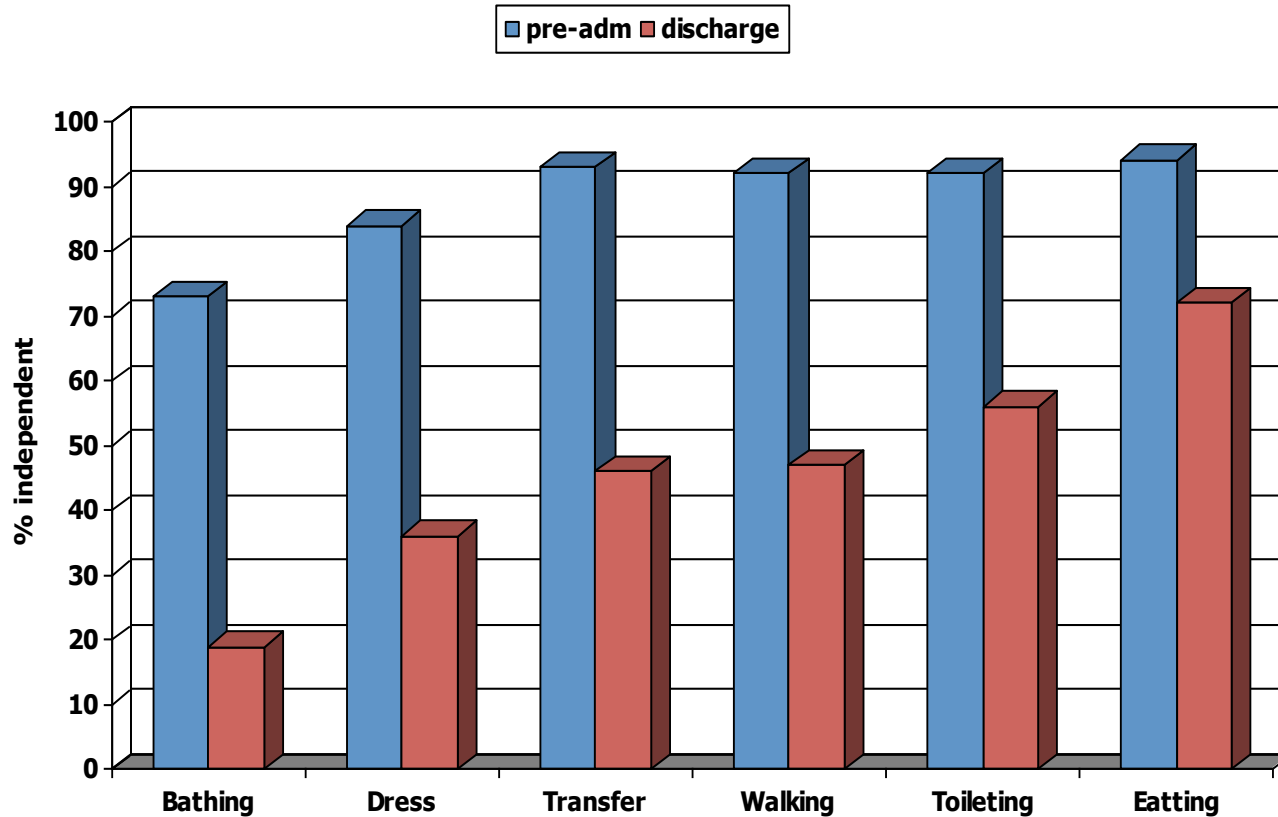
Few Reasons Why Patients Get Re-admitted

- **Lack of care coordination**
- **Symptoms not resolved in hospital**
- **Lack of information and training**
- **Premature/inappropriate discharge**
- **No services in place before discharge**
- **No follow-up post discharge**

Problems Facing The Elderly Admitted To the Hospital

- **Navigating a primary care patient.**
- **Diagnostic challenges.**
- **Hospitalization creates problems.**
- **Lack of benchmarks for geriatric services.**

Functional Decline Associated with Hospitalization



Sager et al Clin Geriatr Med. 1998 Nov;14(4):669-79)

Physical Layout Of Hospital

- **Room Layout**
- **Fall Risk**
- **Sounds**
- **Visual**
- **No Aids for Orientation**
- **Crowded ER**
- **Sharing Rooms**



"Look, as soon as a private room becomes available, you'll get one."

Screening Tests as a Preventive Tool

Laboratory tests:

Lipid panel

Fasting glucose

TSH (thyroid), PSA (prostate),

Vitamin D

Diagnostic Studies:

PAP smear

**Breast exam-
mammography**

Colonoscopy

Others:

Hearing loss

Visual disturbance

Gait instability and fall

**Mild cognitive impairment,
Dementia, Depression**

**Incontinence - both stool and
urine**

**Height loss and change in body
posture — DEXA Scan (bone density)**



Section 4: Cognitive Vitality



Tool #1: Paying Attention

The first tool is paying attention – think of it as a flashlight that focuses on what you want to remember. Attention is the gateway to your memory.

Tool #2: Organization

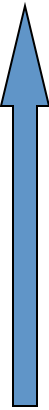
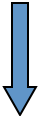
- **Organization is critical for memory. Most of the differences in peoples' memory abilities are because of differences in how they organize memories.**
- **Organizing memories involves putting them into meaningful categories.**

Tool #3: Making Connections

The third tool is related to organization, but has its own place in the toolbox. It's making sure that there are the right connections or links between your memories.

Visual cues are important!

Protect Your Brain

- 
- Lifelong learning, lectures, classes**
 - Mental and physical exercise**
 - Continuing social engagement, commitment to leisure**
 - Stress reduction**
 - Proper nutrition**
-
- 
- Diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, smoking and excess alcohol intake**

Neurobics - Unique system of brain exercises using your five physical senses

Try to include one or more of your senses (taste, smell, touch, see, hear) in an everyday task:

- 1. Get dressed with your eyes closed**
- 2. Combine two senses: Listen to music and smell flowers**
- 3. Break your routine: Eat with your opposite hand**
- 4. Close Your Eyes and identify food by smell, taste and touch.**

What's good For the Heart is Good for the Brain

Cardiac and cognitive health are linked

A Quick Look at Dementia: The Latest Epidemic

Dementia is a disorder that is characterized by impairment of memory, reasoning, logic and personality changes

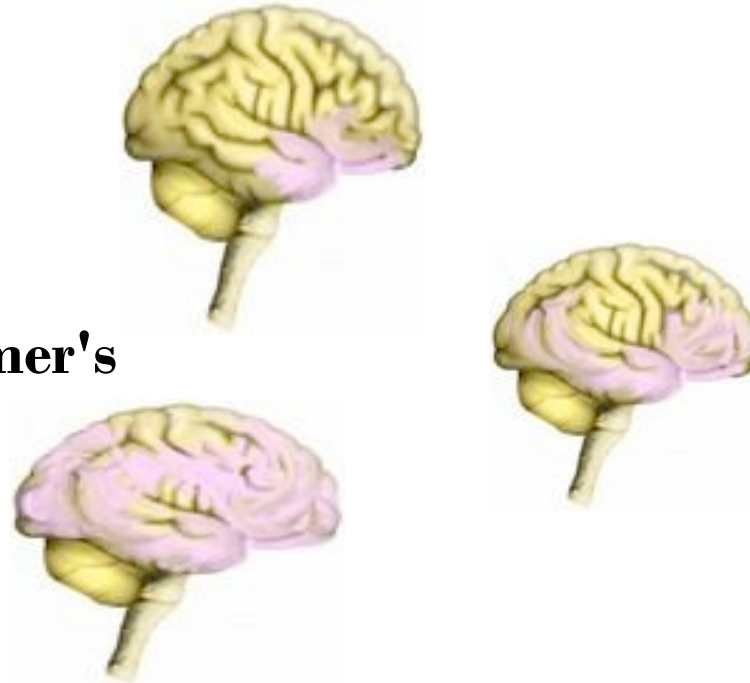
Distinguish between Depression and Dementia

Alzheimer's disease is causing the elderly to fear it more than even cancer.

Early Alzheimer's

Mild to Moderate Alzheimer's

Severe Alzheimer's



**-American Journal of Alzheimer's Disease and Other Dementias®, Vol. 22,
No. 6, 489-498 (2008)**

Warning Signs to Watch for in Aging Adults:

- **Personal hygiene problems**
- **Home in disarray or needing to be cleaned**
- **Weight loss or weight gain**
- **Failure to manage medications or medical appointments**
- **Increased difficulty with mobility (such as climbing stairs or using a bathtub)**

Warning Signs to Watch for in Aging Adults (cont.):

- **Changes in judgment, mood, or overall behavior**
- **Increased forgetfulness**
- **Missed bill payments or other financial difficulties**
- **Unusual or extravagant purchases that are out of character**
- **Decreased social activities or failing to maintain friendships**

Delirium (Post Operative) Can Impact Recovery

Delirium is a sudden change in mental status, or sudden confusion, which develops over hours to days

- **Disorganized thinking**
- **Altered sleep-wake cycle**
- **Increased or decreased psychomotor activity**
- **Illusions, hallucinations**
- **Reduced ability to maintain attention**

Preventive Tips - 1

- **Optimize memory by mental gymnastics - try a cognitive endeavor every 1-2 years, like a new sport, foreign language, card game, or word puzzle.**
- **Mentally stimulating activities - strengthen brain cells and the connections between them, and may even create new nerve cells.**
- **Get rid of stress – stress can make it hard to sleep, concentrate, learn and remember. Exercise and meditation are good stress relievers.**

Preventive Tips - 2

- **Research suggests that high cholesterol may contribute to stroke and brain cell damage. A low-fat, low-cholesterol diet (rich in dark vegetables and fruits, which contain antioxidants) may help protect brain cells.**
- **See your health care professional regularly. Many health problems, such as high blood pressure, diabetes, depression, and cardiac illness, can cause a predisposition for dementia.**

What makes people happy? Try aging!

The amygdala -brain center for processing fear - becomes less reactive to fearful stimuli during older years.

The medial prefrontal cortex, which governs planning and judgment, gets more active during older years.

Aging is not only linked to "putting the brakes on" negative emotions, but also to "releasing the brakes" on positive emotions.



Section 5: Helpful Reminders



Systems To Be Put In Place After Discharge

- **Home Care/Home Health**
- **Adaptive Equipment**
- **Emergency Response Systems**
- **Caregiving**
- **Pain Management**
- **Where to Live**
- **Medication Reminder/Alerts**
- **Nutrition**
- **Home Safety**
- **Hospice/Palliative Care**

Financial And Legal Planning

- **Talk to an elder law attorney/eldercare specialist for Advance Directive, Wills or Durable Powers of Attorney.**
- **Ensure insurance coverage for health, long-term care, custodial care, assisted living, and skilled nursing.**
- **Review pension papers, list major assets (real estate, stocks, cash, jewelry, insurance, etc.).**

Chronic Disease Self Management

Designed at Stanford University to help people

- **Gain self-confidence to control symptoms**
- **Adjust to living with chronic conditions and having active lives**
- **Develop skills needed to help deal with a medical regimen and with the life role changes**
- **Learn disease related decision-making and problem-solving skills**

Social Engagement And Healthy Aging

- **Increased social engagement improves function, reported life satisfaction**
- **Access to health care, mobility are keys to continued productivity through and beyond retirement**
- **Education and skill development through telecommunication broadens productivity and opens social networks**
- **Friends are critical.**

Living Long Living Well

- 1. Avoid isolation, stress, and get enough sleep.**
- 2. Physical exercise enhances the central nervous system - memory**
- 3. Think, think, think and eat smart**
- 4. Education, self-efficacy has an effect on memory**
- 5. Low self-esteem = resignation, lack of effort, downward spiral of unused abilities**
- 6. Social support and engagement has a positive effect on mental performance**

Find 5 People

With global aging, migration, and economic changes - who will care for us?

Find 5 people with whom you'd like to spend your aging years!