

UG (SEMESTER IV)

HSC CC 408

**HUMAN DEVELOPMENT II: DEVELOPMENT IN
ADOLESCENCE AND ADULTHOOD**

**PHYSICAL CHANGES: EARLY
ADULTHOOD TO LATE ADULTHOOD**

Prepared by-

Ms. Nisha Kumari

Assistant Professor

P.G.Department of Home Science

Patna Women's College

OBJECTIVE OF THIS UNIT



In this unit, we shall discuss the period and characteristics of early adulthood, middle adulthood and late adulthood. At the same time, we shall also discuss the physical changes during early adulthood, middle age and old age.

EARLY ADULTHOOD



Early adulthood is the stage of our life between the ages of about 20-40 years old, who are typically vibrant, active and healthy, and are focused on friendship, romance, child bearing and careers. It is the first stage of adulthood in which the body physically changes and is one of the hardest times in our lives after teenage years. According to Sigmund Freud, adulthood is a time for work and love. Our lives centers around our careers and relationships, leaving less time for anything else.

CHARACTERISTICS OF EARLY ADULTHOOD

- It is the 'settling- down age'. This is the period when young men and women are trying out different life patterns in terms of jobs and different individual to share their life.
- It is the 'reproductive age'- parenthood is one of the most important roles in the lives of most young adults.
- It is a 'problem age'- young adults need to cope up with all adjustments within their work and with partner and larger circle of friends and relatives.

(Cont....)



- It is a period of 'social isolation'- with the end of formal education and entrance into adult life pattern of work and marriage, the association with peer groups is slowly weaned.
- It is a 'time of commitment'- as young adults changes their role from students to that of independent adults, they establish new pattern of living, new responsibilities and take up new commitments for themselves and their partners.

EARLY ADULTHOOD- PHYSICAL CHANGES

- In this stage, a person may continue to add a bit of height and weight to her teenage frame.
- The body continues to undergo significant hormonal changes. These changes may make beards grow a bit thicker and the voice to become a slightly deeper and richer. This is the period in which women usually have children so it is the time in which women gain a little weight and finish their full breast development.
- Females reach their adult heights by age 18, and, except for some males who continue to grow in their early 20s, most have reached their adult heights by the age of 21. However, muscles continue to gain mass- especially among males, and both genders continue to add body fat.

MIDDLE ADULTHOOD



In middle adulthood, an important challenge is to develop a genuine concern for the welfare of future generations and to contribute to the world through family and work. This period is aged between 40-60 years of life. Erik Erickson characterises the middle adulthood as a phase of crisis. Unless a person makes this period of meaningful contribution he or she may become preoccupied with selfish needs and desires. The midlife transition is also the period of turbulence of the forties.

CHARACTERISTICS OF MIDDLE ADULTHOOD

- Middle age is characterised by competence, maturity, responsibility and stability.
- This is the time when one wants to enjoy the success of job, satisfaction derived from the family and social life. People look forward to the success of their children.
- Attention gets more focused on health, the fate of children, ageing parents, the use of leisure time and plans of old age.

MIDDLE ADULTHOOD- PHYSICAL CHANGES

- In the 40s, for example, there is usually a decline in near vision a condition known as presbyopia. The lens of the eyes become less elastic and loses its ability to accommodate to objects at close range. Reading glasses or bifocal may be required for the first time.
- In their 50s people often takes their eyes longer to adapt to the change in illumination when they enter a darkened theater or when they go outside on a bright sunny day.
- Some degrees of hearing loss is also found in many people over 50.
- There is loss of elasticity in the skin, especially in the face. This results in lines and wrinkles that are seen as one of the first signs of ageing.

(Cont....)

- Hair starts graying, skin is wrinkling, bodies are sagging and teeth are yellowing.
- Men usually gain weight in the abdominal region, while women gain weight in the hips and thighs.
- For women, menopause occurs between the ages of forty-five and fifty. Women usually experience hormonal changes during this period that result in the loss of the ability to reproduce, a process called menopause.
- Both genders may experience graying of the hair or hair may be thin.

LATE ADULTHOOD



Late adulthood or old age is the period of life in every individual that follows the period of his or her life after he/she turns 65 years of age. Old age consists of ages nearing or surpassing the average life span of human beings, and thus the end of the human life cycle. People can be considered old because of certain changes in their activities or social roles. Old people have limited regenerative abilities and are more prone to disease, syndromes, and sickness than other adults.

CHARACTERISTICS OF LATE ADULTHOOD

- **A Period of Decline:** The old age is one marked by decline; both of physical and mental activities. During old age changes are involutinal, involving a regression to the earlier stages which is a natural accompaniment of aging. The period of old age during which physical and mental decline is gradual and when compensations can be done for these decline is called senescence and the period during which a more or less complete decline of mental and physical decline takes place is called senility.

(Cont...)



- **Individual Differences in the Effect:** Aging is common to all but its effect varies from person to person depending on the varied life situations and mental dispositions. Thus, it seems out of point to specify some typical trait of old age.
- **Poor Adjustment:** Many elderly develop unfavourable self concepts owing to the unfavourable social attitudes towards them. This result in maladjustive behaviours of different degree. Increased loss of status in the society, a desire to escape, helplessness etc. prompts them to behave indifferently.

(Cont...)



- **Desire for Rejuvenation:** People had been trying to stay young from time immemorial. Today the elderly tries to remain young using medicines. The desire for remaining young is a general characteristic of the elderly.

LATE ADULTHOOD- PHYSICAL CHANGES

- **Bone and joint:** Old bones are marked by thinning and shrinkage. This results in a loss of height (about two inches by age 80), a stooping posture in many people, and a greater susceptibility to bone and joint.
- **Chronic diseases:** Most older persons have at least one chronic condition and many have multiple conditions. The most frequently occurring conditions among older persons are uncontrolled hypertension, arthritis, and heart disease.
- **Dental problems:** Less saliva and less ability for oral hygiene in old age increases the chance of tooth decay and infection.
- **Digestive system:** About 40% of the time, old age is marked by digestive disorders such as difficulty in swallowing, inability to eat enough and to absorb nutrition, constipation and bleeding.

(Cont....)

- **Eyesight:** Diminished eyesight makes it more difficult to read in low lighting and in smaller print. Speed with which an individual reads and the ability to locate objects may also be impaired.
- **Hearing:** By age 75 and older, 48% of men and 37% of women encounter impairments in hearing.
- **Heart:** becomes less efficient in old age with a resulting loss of stamina. In addition, atherosclerosis can constrict blood flow.
- **Immune function:** Less efficient immune function is a mark of old age.
- **Lungs:** expand less providing lesser amount of oxygen as compared too the normal rate and results in lesser energy.

(Cont....)

- **Pain:** afflicts old people increasing with age up. Most pains are rheumatological or malignant.
- **Sexual activity:** decreases significantly with age, especially after age 60, for both women and men. Sexual drive in both men and women decreases as they age.
- **Skin:** loses elasticity, becomes drier, and more lined and wrinkled.
- **Sleep:** trouble holds a chronic prevalence in old age and results in daytime sleepiness.
- **Taste buds:** diminish so that by age 80 taste buds are down to 50% of normal. Food becomes less appealing and nutrition can suffer.
- **Voice:** In old age, vocal chords weaken and vibrate more slowly. This results in a weakened, breathy voice.

SUGGESTED READINGS

- Stuart-Hamilton, Ian (2006). *The Psychology of Ageing: An Introduction*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers
- Diane F. Gilmer; Aldwin, Carolyn M. (2003). *Health, illness, and optimal ageing: biological and psychosocial perspectives*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications
- HURLOCK, E. B. *Developmental Psychology: A Life Span Approach* (New Delhi, 1996)