Whose ‘successful ageing’?

Lay vs. researcher conceptualisations of what it means to age well

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Outline

• Background
• Methods
• Results
• Implications
Background – Successful Ageing?

**Successful Aging**

Robert J. Havighurst

“Successful Aging is the capacity to maintain effective adaptation and productivity to the environment of the aged.”

**Human Aging: Usual and Successful**

John W. Rowe and Robert L. Kahn

Research on aging has emphasized average age-related losses and neglected the substantial heterogeneity of older persons. The effects of the aging process itself have been exaggerated, and the modulatory effects of diet, exercise, personal habits, and psychosocial factors often underestimated. Within the population of older adults, there is broad variability in both successful and unsuccessful aging. Many older people are quite capable of making behavioral changes to promote successful aging, in which environmental factors, social factors, and personal factors interact and contribute to the maintenance of functional independence.

The concept of normality in studies of aging must include the recognition of substantial variability in the aging process. The long-term consequences of common lifestyle changes, and the implications of our various demographic research.

Successful and Usual Aging

The concept of normality in studies of aging must include the recognition of substantial variability in the aging process. The long-term consequences of common lifestyle changes, and the implications of our various demographic research.
Background – Successful Ageing?

Chart showing the increase in articles per year related to Mainstream Media (Factiva) and Peer-reviewed Journals (Scopus) from 1981 to 2011.
Methods – Parallel systematic reviews

• Databases
  • CINAHL, PubMed, PSYCInfo, ISI Web of Knowledge, EmBASE

• Terms
  • robust ag(e)ing, optimal ag(e)ing, positive ag(e)ing, healthy ag(e)ing, productive ag(e)ing, effective ag(e)ing, ag(e)ing well

• Lay perspectives
  • Qualitative studies examining conceptualisations of successful ageing

• Operational definitions
  • Studies positing operational definitions of successful ageing
Results – Inclusion Flowchart

- **Search Results** *(n=10,580)*
  - **Duplicates** *(n=5,244)*
- **Abstract Screening** *(n=5,336)*
  - **Ineligible Articles** *(n=1,466)*
    - No SA Analysis *(n=3,433)*
  - **Included Studies** *(n=72)*
    - **Quantitative**
  - **Included Studies** *(n=21)*
    - **Qualitative**
- **Ineligible Articles** *(n=14)*
  - No SA Analysis *(n=353)*
- **Ineligible Articles** *(n=14)*
  - No SA Analysis *(n=406)*
- **Full-Text Extraction** *(n=437)*
- **Full-Text Extraction** *(n=441)*
## Results - Demographic Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Quantitative</th>
<th>Qualitative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-clinical</td>
<td>79.2%</td>
<td>56.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutionalised</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only Women</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only Men</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inuit/Native</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twins</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-income</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socially active</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caregivers</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schizophrenia</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Successful agers</td>
<td><strong>2.8%</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;40</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥40</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥45</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>≥50</td>
<td>24.7%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥55</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥60</td>
<td>21.3%</td>
<td>60.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥65</td>
<td>24.7%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥70</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>≥75</td>
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<tr>
<td>≥80</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥85</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South America</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>27.4%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North America</td>
<td><strong>53.2%</strong></td>
<td><strong>71.4%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results – Successful Agers?
Results – Study Distribution

Quantitative

0 Studies
1-5 Studies
6-10 Studies
>10 studies

Qualitative
Results – Component Distribution

Quantitative

Qualitative

Frequency and dimensionality of conceptualisations captured by each SA domain
Results – Component Distribution

- Environment/Finances
- Personal Resources
- Engagement
- Independence/autonomy
- Life satisfaction/well-being
- Support system
- Health status
- Risk factors/behaviors/history
- Longevity
- Mental health
- Self-rated successful aging
- Affective status
- Physical functioning/disability
- Cognitive functioning/disability
- Presence/probability of Illness

Quantitative
Qualitative
## Implications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Quantitative</th>
<th>Qualitative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dimensionality</td>
<td>Uni-</td>
<td>Multi-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geographic</td>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>Very Limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural</td>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>Very Limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distribution</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Implications**

- **Focus**
  - Quantitative: Biomedical
  - Qualitative: Psychosocial

- **Dimensionality**
  - Quantitative: Uni-
  - Qualitative: Multi-

- **Geographic Distribution**
  - Quantitative: Limited
  - Qualitative: Very Limited

- **Cultural Distribution**
  - Quantitative: Limited
  - Qualitative: Very Limited
Future Directions

• Increased model integration
• Increased geographic and cultural diversity
• Strides towards consensus
• Increased practical utility
Thank you.

Further reading:

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