

Aging, a consideration of its problems and resources available

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Life mean is increasing and the elderly are always more numerous. Their way of life is influenced by many factors: individual, social and cultural. What spaces, opportunities and values does western contemporary community provide to the elderly?

There are healthy elderly and others who suffer from loneliness, alienation, disability, and lack self autonomy.

According to many prejudices, the features of old people in difficulty are often applied to all the elderly. Old people have represented for a long time, since the 1950s, the image of a progressive physical and mental unchangeable decline. Old age was considered as a span of life characterised by loss of learned knowledge acquired in infancy and in adolescence and conserved in adult age. Aging is a natural process and expresses a large individual variability. Every old age is individual. There are ill and declined people and others who live in autonomy, awareness and satisfaction. There are many factors that in old age can promote and facilitate disability, especially retirement and loneliness in men, disability in women.

In the aging process, many people, don't suffer from particular problems, others struggle against difficulties, but later they are able to adapt themselves to new situations.

Many problems can be limited or avoided if old people, in absence of important pathologies, practice physical activity.

In sufferance situations the elderly and their families can take advantage from psychotherapies of different orientations. Physical activity, cognitive and relational stimulation, interests demonstrated towards the family, and the affective social life, aid in to preserving an efficient condition of health and autonomy and prevent troubles linked to passivity, and demotivation. The desire to live to know, to be creative, and to share personal experiences, represent important variables that characterise and define aging, giving it value and significance.

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