

APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY: AGEING AND DEPENDENCY

INTRODUCTION

Old age is a stage of life and ageing is a process that occurs throughout one's life. Both objects of knowledge are multidisciplinary, given that human beings are bio-psycho-social realities. Psychology, as a scientific discipline that is concerned with human behaviour at the necessary levels of complexity, is a basic discipline for considering the psychological changes occurring over the course of a lifetime.

The process of psychological ageing does not occur isomorphically with biophysical ageing. Some psychological functions decline very soon after their peak, while others remain and even continue to develop throughout life.

COMPETENCIES

- Define the current position of psychology of ageing and old age, setting forth theoretical knowledge and applying it in social work.
- Know the modern theories of ageing and old age and apply said knowledge to personal, individual and social situations in the context of social work and dependency.
- Describe and explain the physical, cognitive and personality changes associated with old age and recognize when the process is normal or unusual.
- Evaluate cognitive psychological and personality disorders in older persons in aspects such as memory, attention, intelligence, language and communication, personality and affectivity.
- Apply intervention and optimization programmes and strategies to preserve and improve the individual wellbeing and health of older persons and their carers.

CONTENT

1. Nature of ageing: Definition of ageing. Theories of ageing. Biological ageing. Sensory systems and ageing. Neuronal changes in old age.
2. Intellectual changes in old age: Intuitive beliefs regarding ageing and intelligence. Measurements of intellectual change. Intelligence and qualitative changes. Fluid and crystallized intelligence. Wisdom and expertise. Creativity in old age.
3. Ageing and memory: Ageing and short- and long-term memory. Remote memory. Eyewitness testimony. Semantic memory. Implicit memory. Autobiographical memory. Changes experienced in memory and attention during ageing. Why changes occur. Educational level and its influence on the deterioration of memory. Can memory be preserved and/or improved as we age?
4. Ageing, language and communication: Communication and language. Cognition, interaction and emotion. Deterioration of language in pathological ageing. Evaluation of language and communication. Intervention in language and communication. Can our language be preserved and/or improved as we age?
5. Ageing, personality and lifestyle: personality and adaptation. Self-concept and adaptive processes. Life stories and ageing. Sexuality and affectivity. Social relations. Retirement and free time. Death, mourning and psychological care in terminal illnesses affecting the elderly.
6. Ageing and psychopathology: mental disorders in the elderly (anxiety, depression, delirium, psychopathologies). Ageing and dementia. Clinical aspects of dementia and Alzheimer's disease. Neurological exploration and neuropsychology.
7. Regulated psychological intervention in ageing: Psychosocial, cognitive and emotional intervention. Support in the care of persons with dementia. Intervention in the social environment, health, free time. Importance of qualified personnel.