

OLD AGE AS A NATURAL STATE

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Abstract: The author presents the effects of ageing not only on the biologiclife but also in he social life of the person. The elderly independence is a problem much approached in our days because of the changing of the society and the prolongation of the life time. Different author classifications on old persons are presented.

Key words: old people, classification, independence of the old people, human life cycle

From antiquity we have received further information regarding the last stage of life - the philosopher Seneca considered the human being as a part of nature and aging a natural condition, the elderly were valued and consulted on important decisions.

Today it is easier accepting the old age as a phase of human existence than defining it. Its marks appear sometimes dramatically, in different situations of the personal, familial and social life. Ageing should be considered as it is a mixture of experience and wisdom, love and dedication. It should be encouraged with respect and affection by families that include the elderly, by the community and the society in which they live, these things having a special responsibility towards the elderly, considering them more vulnerable and disadvantaged physically and mentally.

According to the “independence” of the elderly they should:

- a. be able to work and have access to other sources of income;
- b. be able to have satisfactory access to food, water, shelter, clothing, health care services through their own revenues;
- c. be able to live safely suited to their personal preferences and changes in personal capacity;
- d. be able to live in the family as much as possible;
- e. be able to be part of associations of the elderly;
- f. benefit from care and protection of the family and society;
- g. have access to health care services that prevent or delay illnesses.

Nowadays, although several individuals that reached the old age are able to work, they are still forced to retire by legal provisions. In reality, health status and age difficulties vary from one person to another, being known that there are young people considered old ones, or old people considered young, so that their physical features or skills do not meet the age they have.

Age is not only a permanent biological condition, but it is mostly a process that continues throughout the life, ceaselessly changing as time goes on. The course of living or the human life cycle is a progression or an idealized series of age steps that characterize the social roles that individuals must meet the expectations of society on certain behaviors and actions specific to individuals placed in a certain age group.

How to dispel the fear of old age is to discover its "benefits" and to give it a good use. This use can be achieved only in the social framework and within family.

"Social Ageing accumulates a series of prescriptions, sometimes felt painful by the person concerned, in all levels: family, occupation, mode of leisure in certain prejudices and stereotypes "(Matei Drimer & Savulescu, 1991, p 9).

Ageing is the stage of body evolution that occurs after maturity and is characterized by gradual decrease of physiological functions.

Currently, the rule that a person is included in the elderly grade is solely chronological. An individual is considered as part of the elderly, after reaching the age of 65. This rule is pretty random, causing much debate on this segment. A characteristic of this section of the population is that in comparison with others (children, young people, adults) it is clearly defined only on the one hand. In other words it was decided that the minimum age from which the senescence starts is 65, but the maximum age cannot be determined or defined, because it is in every moment the of the oldest person on the planet.

The modern society identify at least two types of representations of aging: - positive representations that focus on the relationship between old age and wisdom the experience of understanding, the approach of life - negative representations which emphasize less pleasant features of aging: suspicion, mistrust in others individuals, inflexible attitudes and behaviors tendency to permanent criticism. Regarding the delimitation of substages, experts have not reached a common point, the Americans make a distinction between young-old (65-75 years) and old-old (after 75 years).

Ursula Şchiopu and Emil Varzaru (1989) identify three substages based on differences between an individual at the age of 65 and one at the age of 100 years:

- young old (young-old) (65-75 years) - physical and intellectual functions and performance are affected in the slightest degree;
- middle-old - between 75 and 85 years;
- old old (old-old) - over 85 years. Incidence of disease and disability increases heavily on middle old and especially the old old.

So a society with no elders or which “tolerates” them considering them as "a burden that you can dispense" denies its past relied on the present, envisaging an unbalanced society on identity values.

The most dramatic changes that caused by the old age are the dependency status to others, switching from an active social position to one

characterized by passivity and inertia that produces profound feelings of fear, isolation and personal randomness.

As I mentioned, one of the most pressing needs for the elderly is urgent requirement for of communication and interaction with others. In its absence, strong feelings of loneliness install, with devastating effects on physical and mental health of the elderly. R.Bennett (Rădulescu, 2000) noted that, for a part of the elderly, the isolation is consistent with their lifestyle in adulthood. While some elderly are isolated on a voluntary basis, some are isolated as a result of changing circumstances, such as widowhood. The negative consequences of addiction, isolation and loneliness of old people cannot be ignored, but they cannot be treated as a single set of events or causes which also affects the lives of all older people.

Changes brought by the old age, are based on the ratio of the elements of continuity and "diversity" so that the lifestyle of an elder is based largely on the lifestyle adopted during youth or his life as an adult.

Attitudes towards aging and old age constitute a very important element of emotional life of the elderly. This attitude depends on the image that their elders had, over time, compared to the last period of life. The thought that terrifies the elderly is on the one hand, that they will die in misery and loneliness. On the other hand they are afraid of futility and that they will no longer be borne by the family. Hence the fear to end their days in a home for the elderly, considered by most of the people a terrible and awkward place where you end up after you have lived all your life in your own home with your own family.

Abrupt withdrawal of social and professional activity of people who can and want to work only in the calendar age required to retire can have negative effects on the health of the elderly. It has been shown that pensioners kept in employment, although having no longer the same physical skills, these shortcomings are compensated for their experience, which

demonstrates the seriousness of the sense of responsibility, sobriety and the sense of responsibility.

At the same time the old adult who walks towards caducity must recognize himself, without complexes, that they reached the age they worthy have to withdraw and hand over the baton to others, avoiding more trouble for himself and for those around him.

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