

Detailed Chapter Outline

Chapter 15: Physical and Cognitive Development in Middle Adulthood

Focus: Mahatma Gandhi, Father of a Nation

MIDDLE AGE: A CULTURAL CONSTRUCT

When Is Middle Age?

- *Middle adulthood:* The years between ages 40 and 65.

The Experience of Middle Age

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

PHYSICAL CHANGES

Sensory and Psychomotor Functioning

Visual Problems Related to Age:

- *Near vision*
- *Dynamic vision (reading moving signs)*
- *Sensitivity to light*
- *Visual search (for example, locating a sign)*
- *Speed of processing*
- **Presbyopia:** Farsightedness associated with aging, resulting when the lens of the eye becomes less elastic.
- **Myopia:** Nearsightedness.
- **Presbycusis:** Gradual loss of hearing, which accelerates after age 55, especially with regard to sounds at the upper frequencies.
- **Basal metabolism:** Use of energy to maintain vital functions.

Structural and Systemic Changes

- **Vital capacity:** Amount of air that can be drawn in with a deep breath and expelled; may be a biological marker of aging.

Sexuality and Reproductive Functioning

Menopause and Its Meaning

- **Menopause:** Cessation of menstruation and of ability to bear children, typically around age 50.
- **Perimenopause:** Period of several years during which a woman experiences physiological changes that bring on menopause; also called *climacteric*.

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Attitudes Toward Menopause

- **Climacteric:** In the early nineteenth century, referred to the period of life at which the vital forces begin to decline.

Symptoms and Myths

Changes in Male Sexuality

Sexual Activity

Sexual Dysfunction

- **Sexual dysfunction:** Persistent disturbance in sexual desire or sexual response.
- **Erectile dysfunction:** Inability of a man to achieve or maintain an erect penis sufficient for satisfactory sexual performance. (Also called *impotence*.)

HEALTH

Health Trends at Midlife

- **Hypertension:** Chronically high blood pressure.

Behavioral Influences on Health

Socioeconomic Status and Health

Race/Ethnicity and Health

Gender and Health: Women's Health after Menopause

Bone Loss and Osteoporosis

- **Osteoporosis:** Condition in which the bones become thin and brittle as a result of rapid calcium depletion.

Breast Cancer and Mammography

- **Mammography:** Diagnostic X-ray examination of the breasts.

Hysterectomy

- **Hysterectomy:** Surgical removal of the uterus.

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Hormone Replacement Therapy

- **Hormone replacement therapy (HRT):** Treatment with artificial estrogen, sometimes in combination with the hormone progesterone, to relieve or prevent symptoms caused by decline in estrogen levels after menopause.

Psychosocial Influences on Health

Stress and Health

- *Allostatic load:* Damage that occurs when coping abilities are inadequate to meet perceived environmental demands.
- *Stressors:* Stress-producing experiences, also defined as perceived environmental demands.
- *Allstasis:* The body's capacity to adapt to stress.

How Stress Affects Health

Occupational Stress and Burnout

- *Sexual harassment:* Psychological pressure created by unwelcome sexual overtures.
- **Burnout:** Syndrome of emotional exhaustion and a sense that one can no longer accomplish anything on the job.
- *Job engagement:* A persistent, positive feeling of motivation and fulfillment in one's job.

Unemployment Stress

COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

MEASURING COGNITIVE ABILITIES IN MIDDLE AGE

K. Warner Schaie: The Seattle Longitudinal Study

Horn and Cattell: Fluid and Crystallized Intelligence

- **Fluid intelligence:** Type of intelligence, proposed by Horn and Cattell, which is applied to novel problems and is relatively independent of educational and cultural influences.
- **Crystallized intelligence:** Type of intelligence, proposed by Horn and Cattell, involving the ability to remember and use learned information; it is largely dependent on education and cultural background.

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THE DISTINCTIVENESS OF ADULT COGNITION

The Role of Expertise

- **Encapsulation:** In Hoyer's terminology, progressive dedication of information processing and fluid thinking to specific knowledge systems, making knowledge more readily accessible.

Integrative Thought

- *Integrative:* The ability of mature adults to use logic, intuition, and emotion; conflicting facts and ideas; and new information with old information in combination.

CREATIVITY

Characteristics of Creative Achievers

- *Creative potential:* The talent for creativity that is present in a person, such as a child, but not yet realized in fact.
- *Creative performance:* What, and how much, a creative mind produces.

Creativity and Age

- *Quality ratio:* The proportion of major works to total output.

WORK AND EDUCATION: ARE AGE-BASED ROLES OBSOLETE?

- **Age-differentiated:** Life structure in which primary roles—learning, working, and leisure—are based on age; typical in industrialized societies.
- **Age-integrated:** Life structure in which primary roles—learning, working, and leisure—are open to adults of all ages and can be interspersed throughout the life span.

Work versus Early Retirement

Work and Cognitive Development

The Mature Learner