

## SHIFTING SANDS OF SELF-CARE – A CALL FOR PAPERS ON SELF-CARE AMONG AGING POPULATIONS

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Many nations face challenges brought on by the sands of time. Older adults comprise more of their populations and, for the foreseeable future, this will be the trend. For example, the US population 65 years and older is about 13%, but by 2025 will be 20%. China's lower mortality rate and one-child policy has resulted in similar statistics. Those Chinese citizens over 65 represent about 8% of the national population, and this figure is expected to rise to over 20% in 2020. In raw numbers, more than 10 million United Kingdom residents are over 65 years old, which is projected to double in coming years to reach about 19 million by 2050.

The fastest growing subgroup of those over 65 years of age will be centenarians across Europe and the US. End of life care has become increasingly complex with higher incidence of frailty and multiple conditions in older people. Estimates from the UK Department of Health indicate the average cost of providing hospital and community health services for a person aged 85 years or more is around three times greater than for a person aged 65 to 74 years.

Nonetheless, the younger subgroup of the aging population represents a challenge as well. There is a substantial literature on the cognitive, physical and psychological changes of aging. Common physical limitations include hearing impairment, weakening vision, and the increasing probability of arthritis, hypertension, heart disease, diabetes, and osteoporosis. The speed of receiving, encoding and storing information decreases for many as they age, and may lead to greater or lesser memory loss. Older adults experience cognitive changes related to mental processes of sensation and perception, as well as intelligence, memory, language, thought, and problem-solving. Personalities remain stable. Depression in non-institutionalized older adults is less than among young adults. However, the important lesson from this research is that many over 65 begin to experience some limitations, but learn to adapt and continue to lead productive lives.

Understanding the adaptation processes that adults use to manage their own self-care is of interest. These self-care coping mechanisms offer opportunities for: (a) family members, caregivers and providers to recognize age related changes sooner; (b) other seniors to learn helpful approaches

from their peers; and (c) health-technology companies to develop products to support the self-care coping mechanisms relating to physical, cognitive and psychological limitations.

The journal *SelfCare* seeks manuscripts of original work, literature reviews, and commentaries on how aging affects the self-care process. Consideration should be given to: how people recognize the intrusion of more subtle limitations into their lifestyles; how they cope with such limitation(s) early in the process; when they seek professional help; the extent to which initial professional help is beneficial; their self-assessment of the impact of these limitations on their daily lives; perceived reactions to their aging by family members and co-workers; the extent to which medications or other therapies help the coping process; how self-care coping mechanisms vary by culture and health disparity, and how younger generations view the aging process looking forward, among many other possible aspects of the early aging process.

By adding to the self-care literature and expanding the knowledge base in this area, we hope to add to our understanding of the shifting sands of self-care over a person's lifetime and develop up-to-date perspectives of the adaptive processes commonly used by the aging population.

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