

For a Healthy Aging

Por un Envejecimiento Saludable

Author

Beatriz Arana Gómez¹
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5177-4220>

Correo electrónico:
baranag@uaemex.mx

Professional Translator

Diana Jaimes Cortés
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5177-4220>

Correo electrónico:
djaimesc@uaemex.mx

¹Universidad Autónoma del Estado de México, Facultad de Enfermería y Obstetricia. Toluca, Estado de Mexico. Mexico. Cuerpo Académico Cuidado Profesional de Enfermería

ISSN: en trámite

Cómo citar este artículo

Arana-Gómez. B. Por un Envejecimiento Saludable. [D. Jaimes-Cortés, trans] Rev. Salud y Cuidado. [Internet] 2022, 1 (3):1-3.

To talk about aging, it is necessary to understand how the pace and lifestyles have changed over time, a hundred years ago, life expectancy was less than 60 or 70 years of age. Mortality increased in the early stages of life, people could even die from a stomach ache; however, those who managed to reach 50, 60, 70 years, or more, were the minority. People had a different lifestyle and a healthier diet than what is lived today, everything was more natural.

The exercise was done without going to the gyms, it was not necessary, because people walked long distances because of necessity or discipline, and they also used to get up early. These habits maintained their physical and mental health. With this lifestyle, there was the opportunity to have a more contemplative and quiet life, since there was contact with nature.

This reflection invites us to rethink the rhythm of life that we have today, where distractions can be found, such as television, the computer, and the cell phone, among others, which have effects on the duration and quality of sleep, as well as balance up our biological clock and circadian rhythm.

Furthermore, the diet has also had changes, in the past, the scarce existence of sugary drinks favored that people did not present diseases that we suffer today, or their appearance was slower. In this reflection, it cannot be omitted that the intake of intoxicating beverages such as pulque, aguardiente, and alcohol already predominated, but they were unadulterated beverages.

We must also reconsider the quality of the products we eat and the ones we have access to, such as the excessive use of additives and hormones in the preparation of food in less time. In this way, the industrialization of many products was invading the market, and the use of preservatives, and non-perishable products, simultaneously brought advantages and disadvantages or harmful effects to the population's health such as the presence or acceleration of the appearance of chronic-degenerative diseases such as diabetes, high blood pressure, obesity, kidney failure, or cancer, among others. This morbidity occurs at younger ages in the population.

All these changes have not only harmed us; on the contrary, advanced technology has brought several advantages for comfort and has increased life expectancy as well as timely prevention and diagnosis of diseases.

Thanks to technology, this new dynamic in the health context and disease prevention has led to the exponential growth of the population over 65 years of age. A health and sociological phenomenon is presented, where the population pyramid has been reversed; the groups that are facing this with greater life expectancy exceed 70 years of age. For example, in 2020, 15.1 million people aged 60 or over resided in Mexico, which represents 12% of the total population. In this way, it is said that in the country, for every 100 children under 15 years of age, there are 48 older adults¹.

In Mexico City, Veracruz, Morelos, Sinaloa, Colima, and Yucatán, the highest rates are observed (from 51 to 90 older adults for every 100 girls and boys under 15 years of age). Mexico City stands out with the highest aging rate in the country (90 older adults for every 100 girls and boys under 15 years of age)¹. This index allows us to appreciate the changes derived from the aging process that reveal different social demands, compared to less aged societies.

Although life expectancy in the population has increased, now we must question ourselves about the quality of life of people over 65 years of age, since unhealthy lifestyles result in living an old-age full of diseases, disabilities, isolation, and abandonment. These consequences should make us reflect and act so that the health and social assistance systems can give a timely response to improve the quality of life of older adults.

The foregoing leads us to consider what Richard A. Kalish (1996) states, old age, as a process, can be favorable or not, it is natural and inevitable to be old, older, elderly, or an older adult. However, neither the aging process nor being old should be considered pathological, strange, or deviant. It is the last part of life that should not be considered a social or psychological problem, but a course of development that forms a continuum with the previous stages of existence.

In this sense, attention is caught on young people, especially, in the monetary aspect, because of the precarious conditions of economic solvency they will have in their old age. Nowadays, saving is inculcated in the new generations, because they will no longer have a retirement after working so many years; teaching to control lifestyles and self-care is left aside. To achieve a dignified old age, it is necessary to follow several simple principles in the different activities of life; for example, taking care of our diet, physical condition, quality and quantity of sleep, relationships with others, as well as our stress resistance.

To conclude, some phrases related to the major stage are presented. For example, Ingmar Bergman said that old age should be like “climbing a great mountain; as you climb, your strength decreases, but your gaze is freer, your vision broader and more serene”; the novelist Gabriel García Márquez mentioned: “old age is not how old you are, but how you feel”, or “never stop smiling, not even when you are sad, someone could fall in love with your smile”.

References

1. INEGI. Estadísticas a propósito del día internacional de las personas adultas mayores (1º de octubre), comunicado de prensa núm. 547/2; 2021.
3. R. A Kalish. La vejez: percepción sobre el desarrollo humano, Ediciones Pirámide, Madrid. 1996.