

Successful (Healthy) ageing: Is it the solution for nursing in response to population ageing

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Population ageing is the process by which older individuals become a proportionally larger share of the total population and this was one of the most distinctive demographic events of the 20th century with fertility decline been the primary determinant. Longevity figures globally not only shows that more people are surviving to old age but once there, they tend to live longer meaning there are expected relative gains in life expectancy. The definitions and indicators used to explain ageing assume that people become old at age 65 although generally, 65-year-olds today live longer than 65-year-olds have in previous centuries. The dramatic rise in life expectancy has resulted in increasing interest in promoting healthier ageing and the study of how people actually age successfully. Although the concept of successful ageing dates back to the 1960s, the goal of successful ageing is now more realistic in today's ageing society as a result of more effective interventions to control and reduce disability and health risks. It has recently been proposed as a field of interest in gerontological research and as a challenge for the design of social policy. Given the dramatic rise and demographical change of older people living longer within communities, there has never been a greater need for the nursing profession to be at the forefront for this ongoing change challenging health care. This paper will address some of the challenges that nursing faces in healthcare delivery and management. It will also identify how realistic our ageing indicators are, the real challenges associated with ageing and how the promotion of healthy and successful ageing supports the demands of the ageing revolution.

Biography:

Dr Claire Donnellan is a Registered Psychologist with the Psychological Society of Ireland, and Assistant Professor and Director of International Initiatives with Trinity College Dublin (TCD), Ireland. She graduated with an honours B.Sc. in Psychology from University of London (2002) and a Ph.D. in Gerontology and Health Psychology from the Department of Clinical Medicine, TCD (2008). Claires work experience in healthcare as a researcher and educator expands across the health sciences both here in Ireland and Internationally in Australia, United Kingdom and the Middle East. Her research interests include examining the challenges to successful ageing in both healthy ageing and in age-related illness and disease populations; specifically stroke and neurological patient cohorts. She has published widely in neurology, gerontology, psychology and nursing journals and has served as guest editor and reviewer for a large number of International high impact factor journals. Her memberships include the International Federation of Ageing, Irish Gerontological Society, the World Federation for Neuro-Rehabilitation including the Special Interest Group for Neuropsychology, and both the European and World Stroke Organisation.