

Study of a comprehensive successful aging model

C-K. CHEN, A-J. SHIE, K-M. WANG *Study of a comprehensive successful aging model. Gerontechnology 2014;13(2):181; doi:10.4017/gt.2014.13.02.134.00* **Purpose** Successful aging refers to the resilience of people who succeed in achieving a positive balance between gains and losses during aging. Nowadays, aging healthily has become important as the elderly population continues to rise. Over three decades of research, perceptions of how to best facilitate the aging process have changed. We found gaps between theoretical explanations and practical phenomena of aging among older people. In order to bridge the research gap, we propose a comprehensive successful aging model, which is called 'Graceful Aging Model', or GAM. Graceful aging indicates that successful aging is achieved both objectively and subjectively. **Method** GAM takes a combination of the three paradigms in successful aging research: 'criteria-based', 'process-based' and 'proactive coping'¹⁻³. The criteria-based GAM indicates the personal goals that individuals strive to reach. In this paper, the set of criteria is classified into two parts, 'principle criteria' and 'moderate criteria'. The principle criteria indicate objectives/goals that are universal to older people. The moderate criteria indicate the objectives/goals that are specific to one or a group of older people. The process-based GAM indicates the procedures of how people master the challenges of aging. That means people select life domains that are important to them, optimize the resources and aids that facilitate success in these domains, and compensate for losses in these domains in order to adapt to biological, psychological, and socio-economic changes throughout their lives. They create an environment for lifelong successful development. It is derived from the idea that resources are limited and people cannot achieve every goal in every life domain; thus, they must choose between goals and develop these goals in a hierarchy. We employ the SOC model, developed by Baltes and Baltes⁴, which describes three strategies of adaptively responding to everyday demands and functional diminishing in older people later life: Selection, Optimization, and Compensation. The proactive coping indicates a stage-wise action plan or strategy that older people apply in order to prevent future stressors or to minimize their effects. Success depends on an individual's personal goals, the specific potential stressors people may encounter while aging, and to what extent they experience these stressors as a threat to their goals. **Results & Discussion** The proposed model focuses both on the criteria for positive outcomes and on the dynamic processes of aging. It also intends to interpret the successful aging from the perspectives of the universal standards and the individual and cultural specific criteria. However, this paper is oriented in proposing a conceptual model that represents graceful aging. Our future research will be focused on the empirical research of the model.

References

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