Older Adults in Lifelong Learning: Participation and Successful Aging

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Abstract

This article examines the relationship between the participation of older adult learners in educational activities and successful aging. In partnership with seniors’ organizations, focus-group interviews were conducted on seniors’ involvement in learning and their perceptions of its influence on successful aging. Successful aging is defined in terms of health, life satisfaction and happiness, and physical and cognitive functioning (Menec, 2003). The study was exploratory, but the results suggest that participation in educational activities has positive effects on successful aging and potentially contributes to both physical and psychological well-being. Connections are also made to activity-theory studies (Menec, 2003), lifespan theory (Baltes, 1997; Heckhausen & Schulz, 1995), and adult education studies on older adults (AARP Survey on Lifelong Learning, 2000; Thompson & Foth, 2002; Withnall, 2002). The authors conclude by suggesting a framework for thinking about older adults’ participation in learning activities and successful aging.
Start studying Successful Aging. Learn vocabulary, terms and more with flashcards, games and other study tools. 33% of older adults have 2-3 chronic conditions and 21% have 5+ of individuals in each age group limited in activities because of chronic conditions. Most common chronic conditions, by age and gender Older males. Hearing impairment and heart disease is much more prominent in older male. Exploration of successful aging. Sense of well-being? Chronological age?