

Understanding behaviour in old age - the psychology of ageing

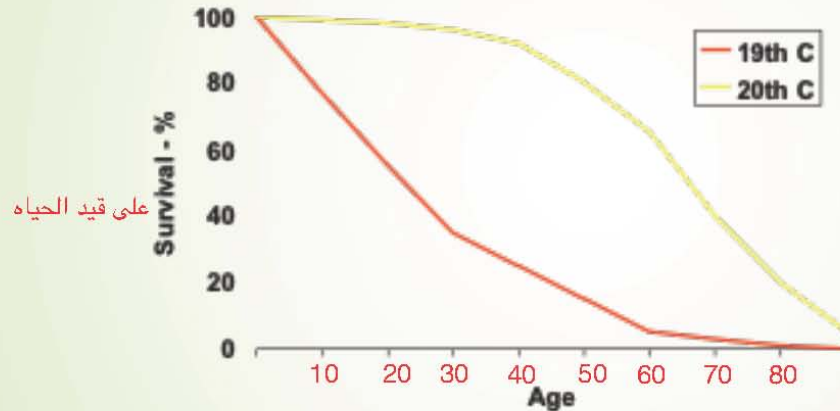
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Understanding behaviour in old age - The psychology of ageing

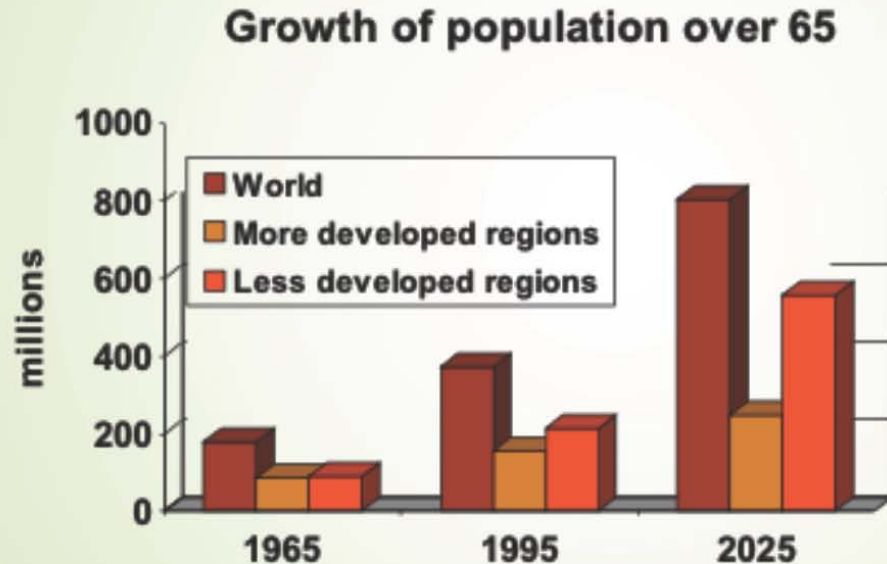
- Background - demographic context
(Geropsychology)
- Psychological issues
 - ^{ذكاء}Intellect and aging
 - Personality and ageing
- Social context

Ageing: Important contextual issues

The context - population ageing



The context - population ageing



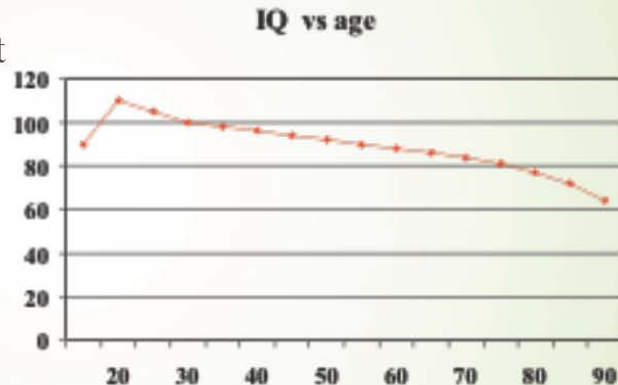
Ageist stereotypes of old peoples' behaviour

- Very prevalent in contemporary culture e.g. معاصره
- “Intellectual deterioration is the norm...”
- “Old people are unable to innovate and adapt to change...” يتماشون .
- “Old age is a period of personal stagnation...” انتظار المرض وكذا
- “Old people tend to be rigid, cantankerous and introverted...”
- But are these valid ideas ?

Intellect and ageing

Intellect and ageing

- Cross-sectional studies emphasised a gradual linear decline in IQ throughout adult life, accelerating after age 70



Intellect and ageing

- Methodological issues in studying intellectual function over the human lifespan
 - Differences between ages - comparing groups of different ages cross-sectionally
 - Changes over time within individuals
 - Cohort effects e.g. numeracy/arithmetical skills
 - Validity of measures

Intellect and ageing

- More valid longitudinal studies paint a less pessimistic picture
- **Shaie and Willis** - Seattle study (35+ years follow up)
- 5 'skill areas' considered
 - Verbal meaning معاني كلمات
 - Verbal fluency فصاحة، سلاسة
 - Inductive reasoning الاستدلال الاستقرائي
 - Numeracy الارقام
 - Spatial orientation معرفة ، تعرّف على المكان
- Decline does not occur in all areas at same rate

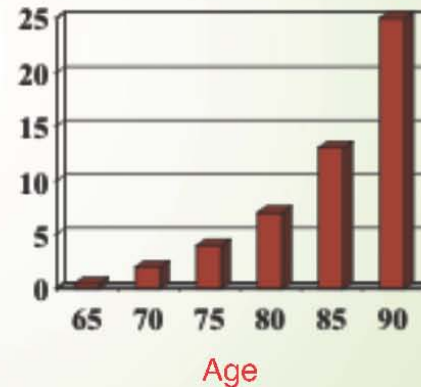
Intellect and ageing

- The most age-sensitive component of intelligence seems to be processing speed
- ‘Crystallised vs ‘fluid’ intelligence
- Highly learnt skills and general knowledge vs problem solving without prior training or exposure
- ‘Terminal drop’ ?

Intellect and ageing - memory

- It gets worse with age
doesn't it?
- Different aspects of
memory function may
behave differently
- Effects of disease...
- Dementia
- Alzheimer's disease

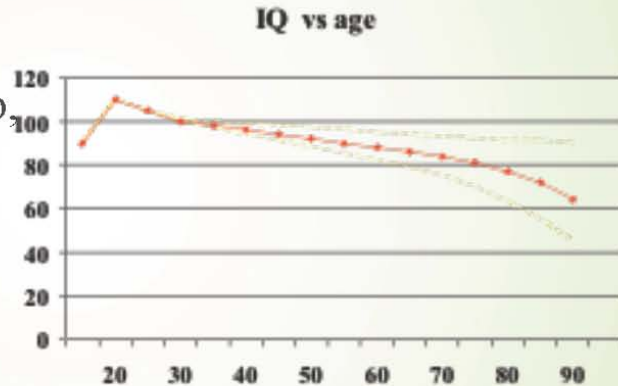
Age specific prevalence of
Alzheimer disease (EURODEM
data)



Intellect and ageing - summary

- Bad news:
- Some aspects of cognitive function do, in general, decline with age

- Good news:
- Some aspects of intellect are very stable over time
- Some individuals change very little



The impact of social and personality factors
on behaviour in old age

Personality and ageing: a complex relationship

- Does getting old change your personality ?
- Or does a gradual throughout-life development in personality eventually correspond to the social construct of ‘an old person’?
- Developmental models and trait models

The developmental model of personality ageing

- Derives from psychoanalytical theory
- Freud et al had a fairly negative view of later life
- The most influential ideas were those of Erikson with his 'life-stages' and associated conflicts **صراع**
 - Young adult life - Intimacy vs. isolation
 - Mid-adult life - Generation vs. stagnation **ركود**
 - Old-age - Integrity vs. despair
تكامل **اليأس**

The Trait model of personality ageing

(Those who adapted)

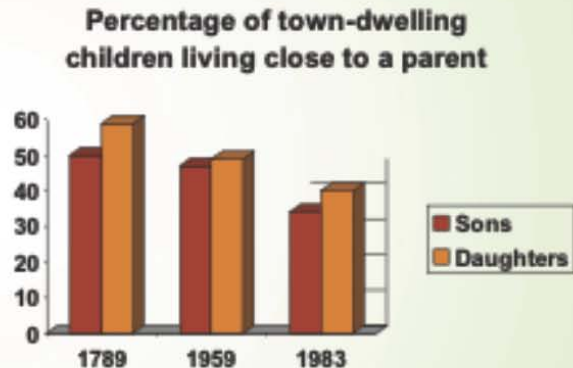
- Personality is described in terms of constituent traits صفات موروثه
- Cross-sectional studies suggest a differential distribution of traits at different ages
- Longitudinal studies however, emphasise the stability of traits التأكيد within an individual over time

Social adjustment and ‘successful’ ageing

- Disengagement model
 - Disengagement from social involvement as an adaptive mechanism
- Activity model
 - Successful ageing requires maximal engagement in all areas of life

The social context of ageing - families in old age

- Major family role adjustments e.g.
 - 'Empty nest' phenomenon
 - Grandparenthood
- Changing patterns of family contact
- The importance of friendships



The social context of ageing - Work and retirement

- Historical perspective يملك تاريخ
- Loss of manifest and latent rewards of paid work منجزاته
- Unemployment vs. retirement كان يعمل ، او كان لا يعمل
- Most people *do* adjust successfully

The social context of ageing - death and bereavement فقدان

- Reluctance to acknowledge mortality in Western culture may make this aspect of ageing 'difficult' and lead to social rejection
- Bereavement in old age - is it different or just more common?

Conclusions

- Most stereotypical views of behaviour in old age are inaccurate
- Older people as a group are notable by their diversity - generalisations are even more unhelpful than at other stages of life
- Later life is not a period of stagnation, but a time of great and often unanticipated change during which people have to adapt rapidly to enforced limitations

ملحوظة

غير متوقعة

فرض قيود

*In youth the days are short and the years are long. In
old age the years are short and day's long.*

Pope Paul VI