Mortality Rates and Causes of Death

- Morbidity rates, illness, and disability
- Specific diseases
- Mental disorders
- Individual differences in health
Morbidity Rates, Illness, and Disabilities

- Common health concerns
- Disability
- Self-ratings of health

Figure 3.1: The mortality rate in the United States increases with age and is lower for women than men at every age.

Common Health Conditions

- Younger adults twice as likely as those over 65 to suffer from acute illness.
- Chronic illness (e.g., heart disease) shows age-related increase.
- Almost half of adults 65 years or older have no chronic health conditions
How is disability defined?

Disability: determined if illness interferes with daily functioning across:
• Activities of Daily Living (ADLs)
• Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADLS)

True or false?

For most adults, the crucial issue is not whether they have a chronic condition, but whether that condition has an impact on daily life.

Health today: Better or worse?

• Decline of disability rates over last 20 years
• Advances in medical care and changes in attitudes toward health
• Overall higher income and more education = healthier lifestyle and better health care
Self-Ratings of Health

U.S. National Health Interview Survey
- Young adults rated themselves healthier than older adults
- Two-thirds of adults 75+ rated themselves as being in excellent or very good health

Chronic Conditions
- Figure 3.2: Rates of chronic conditions for U.S. men and women 65 and older are higher than for younger adults, and there are substantial gender differences, but half report no chronic conditions at all.

Specific Diseases
- Cardiovascular disease
- Cancer
- Diabetes
- Alzheimer’s Disease
Cardiovascular Disease

• Coronary Heart Disease (CHD):
• Atherosclerosis: coronary arteries slowly become blocked.
• NOT a normal part of aging.
• Number one killer of women in US – and world.
• Gender differences in heart attacks.

Cancer

Cancer: rapidly accelerated, uncontrolled cell division caused by a series of mutations, or genetic errors, at cellular level.

• Incidence and decline
• Gender variables
• Prevention

Why?

Bjorklund notes a decline in use of mammograms in the U.S.

Why do you think this occurs?
Diabetes

*Diabetes:* disease in which body is not able to metabolize insulin.

- Types
- Incidence
- Treatment

Alzheimer’s Disease

*Alzheimer’s Disease:* Progressive, incurable deterioration of key areas of the brain.

- Causes: Brain abnormalities caused by the mutation of some genes:
  - Senile plaques
  - Neurofibrillary tangles

Alzheimer’s Disease

**Incidence**

- Fourth leading cause of death and major type of dementia.
- Truly a disease of old age (90% cases develop after age 65).
- Early onset (10% of cases) linked to 3 genes. Cause of late-onset less clear.
Alzheimer’s Disease

Treatment
• New medications slow progress of Alzheimer’s.

Research
Honolulu Asia Aging Study findings
Nun Study findings
Carlson et al.

Something to remember!
Although the risk of having some disease increases with age, not one of these specific diseases is an inevitable part of aging.

Mental Disorders
• Anxiety disorders
• Mood disorders
• Impulse control disorders
• Substance abuse disorders
• Treatment of mental health disorders
Setting the stage…

Prevalence of most mental disorders:
• increases from young adulthood to middle adulthood and then declines
• are predominant at different ages by different disorders

Anxiety Disorders

Major symptoms are feelings of fear and dread when no obvious danger is present.
– Panic disorders
– Phobias
– Generalized anxiety disorder
– Obsessive-compulsive disorder
– Agoraphobia

Anxiety Disorders

Information and Incidence
• 20% of older adults suffer from anxiety disorder.
• Rates of phobias increase with age.
• High rate of comorbidity between anxiety and depression.
• Harm avoidance gene linked to both anxiety and depression.
Mood Disorders

Mood disorders: involve loss in sense of control over emotions, resulting in feelings of distress (Major depression and bipolar disorder).
  • Second most common mental health disorder in US.
  • Experienced by one-fifth of adult US population over lifetime.
  • Gender difference in incidence.

Depression

Depression: typified by long-term, pervasive sense of sadness and helplessness

Incidence: Most prevalent disorder for US adults

Treatment: Some difference in type of symptoms older adults report (e.g., more physical symptoms), but no difference in response to treatment.

Depression and Aging

• Major depression and mood disorders generally problems of young adults
• Older adult depressive symptoms often result of health problems, bereavement, and loss of social contacts
Impulse Control Disorders

*Impulse control disorders:* affects person’s judgment or ability to control strong and often harmful impulses.

**Incidence:**
- Gender differences.
- Half of children with ADHD will continue to experience it in adulthood.

Substance Abuse Disorders

*Substance abuse disorders:* Dependence on drugs or alcohol

**Incidence:** 15% US adults during lifetime; more common in men than in women; age differences in incidence

Treatment of Mental Health Disorders

Kinds of Treatment
- Psychotherapy
- Psychopharmacology – medication
- Alternative providers
Treatment Challenges

- Poor match between treatment and disorder
- Cohort effect contributes to fewer people over 70 seeking treatment for mental health disorders
- Emerging adults less likely to seek services than adolescents under 16

True or false?

The public relations aspects of mental health do not interface well with advances in pharmaceuticals and therapy.

Individual Differences in Health

- Lifestyle
- Gender
- Socioeconomics, race, and ethnicity
- Personality and behavior patterns
- Genetics
- Developmental origins
- Road to good health
Lifestyle

• Sedentary lifestyle and obesity are risk factors for major diseases
• Efforts to lead healthier life becoming apparent

Figure 3.3: Many adults in the United States have met “heart healthy” goals for nine targeted lifestyle changes, but there is still room for improvement.

Gender Differences

Women
• Women have more disability and more non-fatal chronic diseases.
• Women have a higher incidence of most psychological disorders.

Men
• Men have higher rates of alcoholism, substance abuse and suicide.
Gender Similarities in Health

- Women die at older ages of basically same diseases as men.
- The differences in medical disorders (e.g., CHD) are both biological and social.
- More difficult to explain differences in emotional disorders.

Socioeconomics, Race, and Ethnicity

- Chronic conditions and physical limitations show more rapid and extreme changes with age among poor adults.
- A substantial portion of social class differences in health can be accounted for by variations in health habits (e.g., smoking, poor nutrition, etc.).

Socioeconomics, Race, and Ethnicity

- Ethnic differences exist in prevalence of various diseases.
- Substantial portion of social class health differences can be accounted for by variations in health habits.
- Healthy immigrant effect: those who come to the US from other countries tend to be in better health than those who were born here.
Figure 3.4: The risk of dying before the age of 65 gets lower as family income gets higher.

Racial Discrimination and Health Care

- Racial discrimination contributes to black adults receiving lower health care than any other group
- Racial disparity may be explained by doctor bias and cultural differences

Figure 3.5: Black and white patients enrolled in Medicare do not receive the same medical treatment, even when income level, education, and quality of clinic visited are taken into consideration.
Personality and Behavior Patterns

Type A:
- Achievement-striving
- Competitive
- Feel extreme time urgency
- Easily provoked to hostility

• Direct and indirect links between type A behavior and the development of CHD.

If you’re happy and you know it…

Optimism matters!

• People with a positive outlook on life are less apt to suffer from serious physical illness and less likely to die prematurely.

Genetics

• Genotype influences health and may also affect response to treatment for disease

Will your own DNA sequence become part of your medical history in your lifetime?

What consequences could this have for you?
For society?
Developmental Origins

*Developmental origins hypothesis:* Early years → health effects in later life
- Intergenerational effects
- Maternal prenatal health effects
- Infant infectious disease longevity effects

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Health and Illness over the Adult Years

- Turn to Table 3.9 in your text to review health and illness over the adult years.
- Did any of these findings surprise you? Which ones? Why?

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The Road to Good Health

- Eat healthy
- Exercise
- Don’t smoke
- Practice safe sex
- Wear seatbelts and safety helmets
- Get regular check ups
- Know your family health history
- Get early and quality treatment
- Lead a balanced life
Chapter Review

1. ____ rates increase with age, especially after 60.

2. Younger adults have a greater incidence of acute illnesses; older adults have a greater incidence of chronic conditions such as _____.

3. Rates of disability also increase with age. However more than ____% of adults 65 and older report needing no assistance with tasks of daily living.

4. About 81% of women and 90% of men 65 and older are living in a _____ dwelling.

5. ____ is not just found in older adults. About 5% of young adults and 12% of middle-aged adults need assistance with independent activities of daily living.

6. ____ is the top cause of death among adults throughout the world.
Chapter Review

7. The second leading cause of death for adults in the United States is _____.

8. _____ is a hormonal condition in which the body does not produce enough insulin to utilize the glucose produced by the digestive system.

9. The fifth leading cause of death for adults in the United States is _____, caused by progressive deterioration of certain parts of the brain.

10. The onset of most mental health disorders is most likely to be in _____ and _____.

11. Men and women have different patterns of physical and mental health problems. _____ have shorter life expectancies, higher rates of life-threatening physical illnesses, and more alcohol and substance abuse related disease. _____ have more chronic diseases, major depression, and anxiety disorders.
Chapter Review

13. People in lower socioeconomic groups have _____ levels of physical and mental health than higher socioeconomic groups.

14. The lowest level of health in the U.S. is found in _____ and_____ groups.