

HOW DO HEALTH AND AGE AFFECT STRATIFICATION? 211

race, age, social class, and gender affects health; example: people from higher social classes have better access to health care compared with members of society's lower class, so they generally have better health

WHAT THEORIES EXIST ABOUT THE AGING PROCESS? 220

functionalism: as people grow older, they reduce their interactions with others—a practice that is unavoidable, mutual, and acceptable to the individual and society

conflict theory: society places a negative stigma on the elderly, which segregates them from others

symbolic interactionism: successful aging encompasses health, psychological well-being, role integration, and social engagement

WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM IN THE UNITED STATES FOR THE ELDERLY? 223

advantages: the health care system compensates the elderly for the years of hard work they put on the job; it gives retired persons access to good and reliable health care

disadvantages: the growing elderly population means that costs for health care will continue to rise, and current resources may not last long enough to provide health care for future elderly populations

get the topic: HOW DO HEALTH AND AGING AFFECT STRATIFICATION?

Health Defined 211	Aging: The Graying of the United States 216	Conflict Theory—Aging and Inequality 221
Health in the United States: Living Off the Fat of the Land 213	Functionalism—Disengaging from Society 220	Social Security and Medicare 223
Health Care 215	Symbolic Interactionism—Living an Active Lifestyle 220	

Theory**FUNCTIONALISM** 220

- as people age, they shed old social roles and take on new roles
- seeing the elderly slow down and approach death inhibits society's ability to function at full capacity
- retirement makes older people less important because they are close to death
- new generation moves forward

CONFLICT THEORY 221

- middle-aged people have the most power

- as the elderly become less productive, their importance in society diminishes
- the elderly are not respected and ageism occurs

SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM 220

- Cooley suggests that people develop the "self" through interaction
- life improves by developing new activities, hobbies, roles, and relationships
- volunteer work is socially engaging and gives a sense of purpose in life

Key Terms

obesity is an unhealthy accumulation of body fat. 210

health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. 211

social epidemiology is the study of the distribution of diseases and health throughout a society's population. 211

sick role is the expected behaviors and responsibilities appropriate for someone who is ill. 213

medicalization is the idea that the medical community is the center of many aspects of American society. 213

health care is the care, services, or supplies related to a person's health. 215

Medicare is a government-run social insurance program that provides health coverage for people 65 or older. 216

Medicaid is a form of government health insurance designed for the poor and disabled. 216

gerontology is the study of aging and the elderly. 216

"young old" is a cohort that consists of people between the ages of 65 and 75. 216

"old old" is a cohort that consists of people over the age of 75. 216

"sandwiched" generation is the generation that takes care of both its children and its elderly parents. 217

ageism is prejudice and discrimination based solely on age. 219

disengagement theory states that reduced interaction between older persons and others is unavoidable, mutual, and acceptable to both the individual and society. 220

activity theory states that life satisfaction depends on maintaining an involvement with life by developing new interests, hobbies, roles, and relationships. 220

Sample Test Questions

These multiple-choice questions are similar to those found in the test bank that accompanies this textbook.

1. Why do older women live longer than older men?
 - a. They have more testosterone.
 - b. They have less testosterone.
 - c. They have more estrogen.
 - d. They have less estrogen.
2. Which of the following is *not* a reason that children are struggling with obesity?
 - a. Dual-income homes
 - b. Nutritious school lunches
 - c. The price of healthy food
 - d. The popularity of sedentary activities
3. Obesity is greatly affected by
 - a. race.
 - b. gender.
 - c. social epidemiology.
 - d. socioeconomic status.
4. What was the main factor that contributed to the end of the baby boom?
 - a. Women entering the workforce
 - b. A period of economic decline
 - c. A decline in female fertility
 - d. The end of WWII
5. Which is a physical characteristic of aging?
 - a. Loss of body mass
 - b. Heightened senses
 - c. A hunched back
 - d. Senility

ESSAY

1. How does social class affect health?
2. How can television perpetuate stereotypes about people who are obese?
3. Why does the U.S. government reject universal health care plans?
4. Why has life expectancy increased?
5. How do the United States and Japan differ in their perspectives on the elderly?

WHERE TO START YOUR RESEARCH PAPER

To learn more about the elderly population around the world, go to <http://www.census.gov/prod/2001pubs/p95-01-1.pdf>

To learn more about health in the United States, go to <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/hus/hus07.pdf>

To learn more about minority health concerns and disparities, go to <http://www.cdc.gov/omhd/default.htm>

To learn more about obesity, go to <http://www.naafaonline.com/dev2/> or <http://www.obesity.org/>

To learn more about baby boomers and their concerns, go to <http://babyboomertime.com/index.html>

Remember to check www.thethinkspot.com for additional information, downloadable flashcards, and other helpful resources.

ANSWERS: 1. b; 2. b; 3. d; 4. c; 5. a