

PROBLEMS OF GERONTOLOGY AND AGING PROCESSES: SOCIAL, ETHICAL, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL

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Annotation: *This article examines the social and psychological dimensions of aging and the growing scientific attention toward the interaction between youth and the elderly in recent years. The field of gerontology, originating from the Greek words geron (old) and logos (study), is increasingly relevant due to demographic changes and the need for effective intergenerational dialogue. While aging has long been seen as a natural process and thus was rarely studied scientifically, modern research views it through the lenses of biology, psychology, ethics, and social policy. The work explores the evolution of gerontological thought, ethical principles guiding professionals in the field, and the health and societal challenges faced by the elderly. The article also stresses the need for supportive environments and programs that enhance the health, productivity, and dignity of the aging population. It concludes with scientifically grounded suggestions for improving conditions for the elderly within society.*

Keywords: *Gerontology, aging, old age, intergenerational relations, social protection, health, ethics, psychology, elderly care, social environment*

Gerontological studies show that in local literature, research on intergenerational relationships—especially between youth and the elderly—is still insufficient. Aging has often been perceived as a natural phenomenon, and only in the late 19th century did Swiss scientist A. Sabatier propose a scientific approach to understanding concepts such as "aging," "old age," and "death."

Gerontology became formally recognized through the works of I. Mechnikov, who, in his 1903 book "The Nature of Man," emphasized the scientific and spiritual meaning of human life, suggesting the integration of gerontology and thanatology as new frontiers in understanding life's final stages.

Modern gerontology addresses biological, psychological, and ethical factors. It recognizes that aging is not linear or uniform. The elderly are not a homogenous group—some remain physically and mentally active even in their 80s, while others experience early decline.

Common aging-related diseases include hearing loss, cataracts, arthritis, diabetes, and depression. These affect quality of life and often coincide with transitions like retirement, relocation, and loss of peers. Nevertheless, elderly individuals can remain highly productive and socially engaged when provided with appropriate support.

Ethical codes for gerontologists emphasize professional responsibility, moral integrity, and respect for the elderly. These codes guide daily activities and ensure that practitioners operate under shared principles of dignity and accountability.

The article also highlights how environmental factors—housing, community, and socioeconomic status—play a critical role in shaping health outcomes for the elderly. Programs aimed at improving elderly well-being must combine individual care with social support and policy innovation.

Conclusion: Aging is a multifaceted process influenced by biological, social, and cultural factors. Scientific and ethical approaches to aging must go beyond mere medical treatment and address the holistic well-being of older individuals. Promoting healthy aging requires integrated strategies involving families, communities, and governments. Empowering the elderly through meaningful activity, social inclusion, and adequate healthcare not only benefits individuals but strengthens societal cohesion. Therefore, gerontology must continue to evolve as a vital interdisciplinary science with direct applications in healthcare, education, and policy.

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