Health Issues for Aging Populations

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Overview of Class, 2007
Biological Basis and Clinical Aspects of Aging

- Physiologic changes
- Loss of homeostatic reserve
- Increased vulnerability to disease
- Comorbid conditions
- Life expectancy
- Maximum life span potential -- upper limit to human life?
- Theories to explain process of aging
Demography of Aging

- Effect of fertility, mortality, migration
- "Demographic imperative"
  - 13% of population in 1990s
  - 24% in 2030
  - Increase in number of oldest old
- Aged dependency ratio:
  - 38 persons age 65 and over per 100 persons aged 18-64
Number of people age 65 and over, by age group, selected years 1900-2000 and projected 2010-2050

Note: Data for 2010-2050 are projections of the population. Reference population: These data refer to the resident population. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census and Projections.
Figure 1: Number of Persons 65+, 1900 - 2030 (numbers in millions)

Year (as of July 1)

A profile of Older Americans: 2006, AOA, US, DHHS
Physical Disorders Associated with Aging

- Normal aging versus disease
- Chronic illness
- Prevalent diseases
- Diseases associated with health care use, mortality
Mental Disorders of Older Persons

- Dementia, depression, delirium most prevalent
- Prevalence of dementia
  - in nursing homes: 40-67%; community 4-5%
  - Implications for costs of care
  - Behavior problems associated with dementia
  - Risk factors
Functional Capacity and Disability

- Measurement of health status
  - number of diseases
  - severity
  - health services utilization
  - functional capacity

- Measurement of functional capacity
Projected Disabled Population

- Longer life, higher disability
- Constant
Preventive Health for Older Persons

- Primary, secondary and tertiary prevention
- Preventive services
- Life style change
  - Physical activity
  - Diet
  - Smoking, excessive alcohol intake
  - Psycho-social, self-mastery
Total Life Expectancy, Active Life Expectancy and Disabled Life Expectancy

Piedmont Health Survey of the Elderly; Women, Age 65

White Women
- Low Education: 15.2 years active, 2.6 years disabled, Total Life Expectancy 17.8 years
- High Education: 18.0 years active, 3.0 years disabled, Total Life Expectancy 21.0 years

Black Women
- Low Education: 15.6 years active, 2.7 years disabled, Total Life Expectancy 18.3 years
- High Education: 19.5 years active, 3.3 years disabled, Total Life Expectancy 22.8 years

Health Services for Older Persons: Ambulatory

- Ambulatory visits:
- Chronic care follow up:
  - hypertension, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, diabetes, congestive heart failure
- Preventive care
- Integrated, coordinated care
Health Services: Hospital Care

- About 3,549 hospitalized per 10,000 persons age 65+
- Trend toward decrease in days 5.8 days,
- Problems with hospitalizing older persons
  - “cascade iatrogenesis”
- New types of hospital services
- Role of managed care in reducing hospitalizations
Health Services: Community-based and institutional long-term care

- Home health care: acute vs long term
- Adult day care
- Hospice
- New services
  - Continuing Care Retirement Communities
  - Assisted Living (Board and Care)
  - PACE, SHMOs
- Institutional care
Psychosocial Aspects of Health and Aging

- Issues for family caregivers
  - Who are they?
  - How do you define “caregiver burden?” How do you measure it?
  - Does this burden affect health, mental health?
  - Research to relieve caregiver burden

- Changing roles of older persons

- Sense of control, self-mastery

- Social isolation
Federal Health Policies Related to Older Persons

- Medicare
  - Benefits, adding prescription drugs
  - Reimbursement to providers

- Medicaid
  - Long-term care
    - PACE, SHMO
State Health Policies Related to Older Persons

- **Regulatory policy**
  - Nursing homes
  - Assisted living
  - CCRCs

- **Financing of care**
  - Move to managed care
  - Nursing home payment
  - PACE-type programs
Ethical Issues in Providing Health Care to Older Persons

- Principles: beneficence, autonomy, justice, non-malfeasance
- Informed consent for care, research
- Equal access to resources vs. rationing
- Issues surrounding death and dying, long-term care
Data Sources for Study of Health of Older Persons

- Claims data (Medicare and Medicaid)
- Interview data
- Medical records
- Encounter data
- Hospital discharge summaries
- National Long-term Care Survey
- National Nursing Home Survey
Data Sources for Study of Health of Older Persons, continued

- Medicare Current Beneficiary Survey

- Medical Expenditure Panel Survey