

AGING, PLACE, and HEALTH

A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

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Contents

Preface	viii
Acknowledgments	x
About the Authors	xi
Contributors	xii

SECTION I Background **1**

Chapter 1 Global Aging of the Population: The Significance of an Epidemiological Perspective..... **3**

Introduction	4
Healthy Aging and Place	6
Background	6
Epidemiological Transitions and Changes in Life Expectancy	8
Epidemiologic Transition Theory: Reflections and Revisions	11
Toward an Epidemiology of Aging	16
Global Studies in the Epidemiology of Aging	18
Epidemiology of Aging: The Core Questions ...	20
Conclusion and Future Directions	21

Chapter 2 Aging, Health, and the Environment: An Ecological Model **23**

Introduction: Why Use an Ecological Model and a Life Course Perspective in the Epidemiology of Aging?	24
---	----

The Ecological Model	25
An Overview	26
What Is It?	28
The Life Course Perspective	29
An Overview	29
What Is It?	30
The Importance of Place	31
Resilience Later in Life	33
Epidemiology of Aging	34
Epidemiology of Aging Research	34
Conclusion and Future Directions	40

Chapter 3 Early-Life Predictors of Late-Life Health **45**

Introduction	46
Developmental Epidemiology	47
Developmental Origins: Core Issues in the Epidemiological Science	48
Developmental Origins: Biological Mechanisms	50
Developmental Origins: Animal Models	52
Methodological Shortfalls and Their Remedies	53
Summary	54
Developmental Demography	54
Famine	55
Disease	56
War	57
Nonspecific Threats to Cohort Health and Longevity	57
Conclusion and Future Directions	59

SECTION II Aging, Health, and Function 67

Chapter 4 Survival, Mortality, and Cause of Death.....69

Introduction.....	70
Definitions and Measurements	70
Epidemiology of Mortality	71
Methodological Issues.....	71
Changing Causes of Death	74
Socioeconomic Disparities in Mortality.....	74
Aging Molecular Biomarkers and Mortality.....	77
Measures of Functional Capacity as Predictors of Mortality.....	79
Life Course Epidemiology of Mortality	81
Male–Female Survival Paradox.....	83
Lifestyle Versus Genetic Risk Factors for Mortality.....	84
Compression of Morbidity.....	86
Conclusion and Future Directions.....	87

Chapter 5 Aging and Late-Life Mobility91

Introduction.....	92
Mobility and Aging	92
Background	93
Mobility Measures Focused on Older Adults	93
A Biopsychosocial Framework	94
Definition and Measurement of Mobility.....	96
Approaches to Measurement of Mobility in Aging	97
Self-Report Measures of Mobility.....	97
Performance-Based Measures of Mobility.....	97
Instrumented Measures of Mobility.....	101
Comparisons Across Types of Measures	101
Conclusion and Future Directions.....	108
Acknowledgments	109

Chapter 6 Aging and Cognitive Functioning113

Introduction.....	114
Ecological Determinants of Late-Life Cognition: Brain Development in Early Life and Perinatal Factors	115
Brain Health in Midlife and Late Life.....	119
Disease-Related Factors.....	122
Application of Life Course Models to Cognitive Heterogeneity in Late Life	124
Interventions to Promote Cognitive Health	125
Conclusion and Future Directions.....	127

Chapter 7 Aging and the Epidemiology of Depression.....133

Introduction.....	134
Definition and Measurement	134
Definitions	134
Measures.....	135
Evidence for Utility of Screening	136
Depression in Different Settings.....	138
Demographic Patterns.....	139
A Life Course Perspective	139
Age	139
Late-Life Depression Often Includes Both Late and Early Onset.....	139
Gender.....	141
Race and Ethnicity.....	142
Socioeconomic Status.....	143
Social Factors	144
Stressful Events.....	144
Bereavement.....	145
Caregiving.....	145
Social Support.....	146
Psychological Factors	146
Disease and Comorbidities	146
Dementia	146
Cardiovascular Disease	147
Interventions	148
Conclusion and Future Directions.....	151

Chapter 8 Disease, Comorbidity, and Multimorbidity159

Introduction.....	160
Background	162
Definitions	162
Measurement	163
Epidemiology of MM	166
Patterns and Classifications of MM.....	167
Sociodemographics	169
Age and MM	169
Gender and MM.....	170
Ethnicity and MM.....	170
Socioeconomic Factors	171
Socioeconomic Status and MM.....	171
Immigration and MM.....	173
Living Arrangements, Social Networks, Social Support, and MM	173
Social Capital and MM.....	173
Genetics and MM.....	174
Lifestyle	175
Psychological Factors	176
Mental Health and Physical MM.....	176
Health Locus of Control and MM.....	177
Psychosocial Factors	178
Adverse Childhood Experiences and MM	178
Psychosocial Factors in Adults and MM ...	178
Polypharmacy and MM.....	178
Conclusion and Future Directions.....	179

Chapter 9 Frailty and Geriatric Syndromes189

Introduction.....	190
Geriatric Syndromes	190
Frailty: Theories and Definitions	192
Biology of Frailty.....	196
Frailty Instruments and Measurement.....	198
Links Between Frailty and Geriatric Syndromes.....	202
Studies of Associations Between Geriatric Syndromes and Frailty.....	203

Physiologic Risk Factors for Frailty and Geriatric Syndromes.....	204
Latest Findings from Frailty Research.....	206
Prevalence and Incidence of Frailty	206
Natural History of Manifestations of the Frailty Syndrome.....	208
Current Issues and Challenges of Frailty Research.....	210
Clarifying Conceptualization and Measurement.....	210
Frailty as a Multidimensional Construct: Physical and Cognitive Frailty.....	211
Phenotypes of Frailty	213
Frailty, Stress, and Compensation	213
Summary.....	216
Conclusion and Future Directions.....	217

Chapter 10 Aging and Falls229

Introduction.....	230
Heterogeneity and Classification of Falls	231
Measurement Methods.....	233
Personal Risk Factors.....	234
Environmental Risk Factors.....	235
Increasing Falls Risks with Advancing Age.....	237
Sex Differences in Indoor and Outdoor Falls....	238
Racial Differences in Activity Patterns and Fall Risks	239
Geographic Variations in Fall Rates	240
Nutrition and Falls	241
Physical Activity and Falls	243
Prevention Strategies	243
Fall Prevention Technologies.....	245
Conclusion and Future Directions.....	245

Chapter 11 Motor Vehicle Crashes and Other Traffic-Related Causes of Injury and Death in Older Populations255

Introduction.....	256
Why Crashes?.....	256
Driving Demographics.....	257

Crash and Injury Risk	257
Exposure	260
Risk Factors	261
Gender	261
Medical Conditions	261
Functional Impairments	261
Interventions	262
Driving Cessation and Its Effects	264
Transitioning from Driving	264
Pedestrians	265
Noncollision Injuries in Public Transport	265
Conclusion and Future Directions	266

SECTION III Conduct and Analysis 271

Chapter 12 Conducting International Epidemiological Studies of Aging273

Introduction	274
Rationale	274
Why Should We Conduct International Studies?	274
What Are the Contributions of International Studies to Science?	275
Design Features of Current Epidemiological Studies in Aging	276
Survey of Health, Ageing, and Retirement	277
World Health Organization's Study on Global Ageing and Adult Health	277
The 10/66 Dementia Research Group	278
International Mobility in Aging Study	279
SAGE-Plus: A Post Hoc Harmonization Study	280
Design Features of Epidemiological Aging Studies	281
Types of Epidemiological Studies of Aging	281
General Features of a Proper Cohort Study for International Aging Research	282

Specific (Practical) Aspects of Establishing, Managing, and Maintaining International Cohorts of Older Adults	284
Conclusion and Future Directions	287
Summary	289

Chapter 13 Roadmap for Statistics in Aging Studies291

Introduction	292
Data (and Notation)	293
Model	293
Causal Models	293
Statistical Models	294
Mixed Models	295
Generalized Estimating Equations	299
Semiparametric to Nonparametric Models	299
Model Assumptions About Missing Data ("Missingness")	301
Parameter of Interest	302
Parameter Interpretation in Misspecified Models	304
Estimation	305
Measures of Uncertainty	306
Parametric Models and Maximum Likelihood ..	306
Semiparametric Inferences	309
Conclusion and Future Directions	310

SECTION IV Translation and Future Directions 313

Chapter 14 Healthy Aging and Its Implications for Public Health: Social and Behavioral Interventions.315

Introduction	316
Risk Factors	317
Exemplars	318
Physical Activity	318
Built and Natural Environment	318

Research Evolution: From Determinants to Dissemination.....	320
Guiding Questions for the Research Translation Process.....	320
The Evidence-Based Movement	322
Fundamentals of Evidence-Based Programs.....	323
Building the Mechanisms in Silos	323
An Integrated Approach.....	323
More About Translation and Adaptation	324
Treatment Fidelity	325
Scalability	326
Sustainability	327
Integrating Community and Clinical Interventions	328
Policy.....	329
Conclusion and New Directions.....	332
Programmatic Efforts	332
Revisiting Research Paradigms.....	332
Dissemination of New Advances in Science.....	332
The Role of Technology.....	333
Intergenerational Emphases	333

Chapter 15 Healthy Aging and Its Implications for Public Health: Healthy Communities.....337

Introduction.....	338
Human Development and the Negotiation of Person–Environment Fit.....	339
Continuity.....	339

Compensation	339
Control.....	339
Connection	340
Contribution	340
Challenge/Comfort.....	341
The Ecological Framework of Place.....	341
People	342
Physical Setting.....	342
Program.....	342
Examples of Place-Based Initiatives to Promote Healthy Aging.....	343
Visitability	343
Complete Streets	345
Age-Friendly Community Initiatives.....	347
Support-Oriented Initiatives	349
Conclusion and Future Directions.....	352

Chapter 16 Aging and Public Health: New Directions359

Introduction.....	359
Themes	360
Life Course Perspective	361
Natural and Built Environment.....	361
Technology.....	362
Conceptual Models.....	363
International Studies.....	364
Conclusion	365

Index367

Preface

William A. Satariano and **Marlon Maus**

An older Dutch couple, out for an evening stroll in Amsterdam in 1995, turn a corner and are startled by the sight of advancing German soldiers marching down the street, as they had marched each night on patrol in 1944.

This unsettling sight is the centerpiece of the 1995 installation “The Neighbor Next Door” by artist Shimon Attie, which presents a visceral multimedia interpretation of the experiences of those driven into hiding by the Nazi regime that reflects on the relationships among place, memory, and identity (Shainman, 2014).

Attie’s art, in his own words, is designed to “unlock the memory of place” by projecting, with an elaborate system of lasers, documentary film footage of where the events took place so many years before. By projecting the film from 1944 onto the street in Amsterdam, he unlocked the memory of that place through



Shimon Attie. Scene from *Prinsengracht*. On-location film projection, from the project *The Neighbor Next Door*, Amsterdam, 1995.

Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York.

the image of life-size German soldiers. Some of the other people walking that night stop, turn, and avoid the exhibition; others walk among the figures, directly confronting the images of the German soldiers who had occupied their country during World War II.

“Unlocking the memory of place” is central to the thesis of this book. We argue that to understand the epidemiology of aging and health, it is important to incorporate information about place across the life course. As Robert Bevan (2007) writes, a place represents a “touchstone for collective memory.”

In 2006, one of us published a book titled *Epidemiology of Aging: An Ecological Approach* (Satariano, 2006). That book sought to provide an overview of research and practice in the epidemiology of aging. An ecological model was employed to provide coherence to the consideration of aging: “Patterns of health and well-being are due to a dynamic interplay of biological, behavioral, social, and environmental factors that play out over the life course of individuals, families, neighborhoods, and communities.” Each chapter of the book addressed an important topic in aging from survival to function, depression, and health conditions. At the end of the book, the translation of the aging research into practice and policy was considered. While the current text builds on the 2006 book and a general, ecological model, a number of important differences and enhancements exist.

First, and most important, this text represents a collaboration among experts in the field of aging and public health. What was a challenging endeavor barely a decade ago became a Sisyphean task given the truly

exponential growth of information in research, teaching, and policy related to the area of aging studies, and in particular the epidemiology of aging. What a single author could have hoped to review and summarize back then, now requires proficiency in multiple areas of expertise.

We came to the field of aging and public health along different paths. While one of us (Satariano) entered the field from the social sciences, the other (Maus) approached aging and public health from clinical medicine and ophthalmology. We invited the authors whose work is presented in this text to join the project based on their expertise in particular areas of aging research, practice, and policy. Each set of authors kindly agreed to prepare a chapter, treating their topic (e.g., cognitive function) as an outcome in epidemiological research. In addition to addressing the significance of the topic, each author reviewed conceptual and measurement issues, implications for practice and policy, and future directions for research. We asked the authors to look broadly and identify key research throughout the world.

Second, this text is written from a global perspective. As noted previously, each author was asked to adhere to that perspective and identify work from countries throughout the world, not just the United States. Our purpose, then, is to provide a comprehensive examination of aging research by topic, and not by country. Therefore, this text does not provide a compendium of aging research from each country, as has been done by other authors. For example, Robinson and colleagues (2007) developed an excellent book on global aging, which uses that approach.

Third, an ecological model, in many ways, captures the intersection of time and place. While the 2006 book addressed the topics of life course and place, it did so very briefly and did not reflect at all the state of outstanding research today. The current text has been expanded to capture the nuances of these important topics.

Fourth, in addition to key topics in the epidemiology of aging, this text includes two important chapters on the translation of research into practice and policy. These chapters are

written from different perspectives—one focusing on social and behavioral programs and the other emphasizing more place-based programs.

Fifth, we have included a chapter on the conduct of international studies on aging, with a particular focus on research from developing countries.

Sixth, we address key statistical issues as a roadmap for future research in aging.

Finally, we conclude with a chapter on final directions. As noted previously, we asked each author to discuss future research: which research is anticipated? Which research should be conducted? In the final chapter, we attempted to look across the chapters and provide a summary of key areas for future research. Each of the authors collaborated in the preparation of the final chapter.

This edition is intended for a wide audience that includes not only other experts in the field and academics, but also students, practitioners, and interested researchers from other disciplines. We hope that our text will help inspire further progress in the global effort toward a “state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” (World Health Organization, 1946) of our older population.

Note that the words “epidemiologic” and “epidemiological” are used interchangeably throughout the book.

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- Marlon: My partner, Alan Selsor; my mother, Josele Cesarman; my father, Teodoro Maus; and my sister, Tamara, and her family Marcos, Alexis, Jose, and Ivan

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William A. Satariano obtained a BA degree from Santa Clara University (1968), a PhD in sociology from Purdue University (1973), as well as an MPH (1978) and an MS in epidemiology (1979) from University of California, Berkeley. Prior to returning to Berkeley in 1989 as a faculty member, he served as Deputy Director of Epidemiology at the Michigan Cancer Foundation (now the Karmanos Cancer Institute) (1980–1989). He is the recipient of grants and contracts from the National Cancer Institute, the National Institute of Aging, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. He held the Berkeley Endowed Chair in Geriatrics from 2012–2015. He is the author of *The Epidemiology of Aging: An Ecological Approach* (Jones & Bartlett, 2006). His research interests include aging, health, and function; cancer survival; the effects of the built environment on health behavior and health status in older populations; and technology and aging. Most recently, he and Marlon Maus and other colleagues have been collaborating on the development and evaluation of an iPad-based app (“WordWalk”) to encourage walking and brain health among older adults.

Marlon Maus was born and raised in Mexico. He received a BA degree from Brown University (1981) and a medical degree from Jefferson Medical College (1985). His ophthalmology residency at Wills Eye Hospital (1989) was followed by an orbital surgery and neuro-ophthalmology fellowship (1990) and an oculoplastic fellowship at Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary through Harvard University (1991). He then became director of the residency and emergency services at Wills Eye Hospital, where he did research and published extensively on surgical techniques and oculoplastics. He then joined the School of Public Health at University of California, Berkeley, receiving an MPH degree and a doctorate in public health (2011). His present research centers on the relationship between the built environment and public health, including visual disabilities, with a focus on aging. He is collaborating with William Satariano and other colleagues on various projects.

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