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Active aging: the future of a society that is learning to age.

Active aging: the future of a society that is learning to grow old

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Summary

Population aging is one of the main demographic phenomena of the 21st century, directly impacting social, economic, and political structures. In this context, the concept of active aging emerges as a fundamental strategy to promote quality of life, autonomy, and social participation of the elderly population. This article aims to analyze active aging as an essential paradigm for the future of a society that is learning to age. This is a qualitative study, based on a literature review of scientific publications and institutional documents, with emphasis on the guidelines of the World Health Organization. The results show that active aging goes beyond the absence of disease, encompassing continuous opportunities for social participation, security, and lifelong learning. It concludes that the adoption of this paradigm is indispensable for building a more just, inclusive society prepared for population aging.

Keywords: Active aging. Elderly population. Quality of life. Society.

Abstract

Population aging is one of the main demographic phenomena of the 21st century, directly impacting social, economic, and political structures. In this context, the concept of active aging emerges as a fundamental strategy to promote quality of life, autonomy, and social participation among older adults. This article aims to analyze active aging as an essential paradigm for the future of a society that is learning to age. This is a qualitative study based on a literature review of scientific publications and institutional documents, especially guidelines from the World Health Organization. The results show that active aging goes beyond the absence of disease, encompassing continuous opportunities for social participation, security, and lifelong learning. It is concluded that adopting this paradigm is essential for building a more just, inclusive, and aging-prepared society.

Keywords: Active aging. Older adults. Quality of life. Society.

1. INTRODUCTION

The increase in life expectancy observed in recent decades represents one of the humanity's greatest achievements, resulting from scientific and technological advancements and improvements in living conditions. However, this phenomenon also poses significant challenges, especially with regard to population aging and the need for reorganization of social policies. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the aging of the population is occurring at an accelerated rate, especially in developing countries, such as Brazil (WHO, 2005).

Traditionally, old age has been associated with negative stigmas, such as dependency, unproductivity and fragility. However, this view is gradually being replaced by a broader perspective that recognizes the potential for participation and social contribution of the individual elderly. In this scenario, the concept of active aging emerges as a new paradigm, to value autonomy, social participation, and quality of life throughout aging.

Therefore, this article proposes a reflection on active aging as the future.

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of a society that is learning to age, discussing its theoretical foundations,
social implications and challenges for its implementation.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Aging is a complex and multifaceted process that involves dimensions biological, psychological, social, and cultural factors. For Neri (2013), aging does not only mean... decline in physical functions, but also a continuous process of adaptation to the transformations that These occur throughout life.

The concept of active aging was systematized by the World Health Organization. being defined as the process of optimizing opportunities for health, participation and safety, with the aim of improving quality of life as people age (WHO, 2005). This concept is based on three central pillars: health, participation, and safety.

Camarano (2014) highlights that active aging represents a significant change. in the way society understands old age, by recognizing the elderly as subjects of rights and active agent in the social context. Furthermore, Debert (2012) emphasizes that this approach contributes to deconstruct negative stereotypes associated with aging, promoting a positive vision. a more positive and inclusive view of old age.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study is characterized as qualitative research, of the review type. Bibliographical analysis. Classic works and scientific articles published in books and journals were analyzed. academic and institutional documents, with an emphasis on the productions of the World Health Organization. Health and Brazilian authors who address population aging and active aging.

The selection of material was based on thematic relevance, the timeliness of the publications, and... Theoretical contribution to the understanding of active aging as a promotion strategy. of the quality of life of the elderly population. The data analysis was conducted in an interpretive manner, seeking to establish relationships between different authors and theoretical perspectives.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of the bibliographic material made it possible to identify that active aging constitutes one of the main pillars for promoting the quality of life of the elderly population in contexts of Accelerated population aging. The studies analyzed converge in pointing out that the adoption The adoption of practices and policies aimed at active aging is directly associated with maintaining functional autonomy, improved physical and mental health, and the strengthening of social bonds of

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elderly (WHO, 2005; NERI, 2013).

The results show that social participation plays a central role in

Active aging. The inclusion of older adults in community, cultural, educational and other activities.

Leisure activities contribute significantly to reducing social isolation, a phenomenon that is frequently observed. associated with advancing age. According to Lima and Silva (2018), social participation favors a sense of belonging and social usefulness, in addition to positively impacting self-esteem and well-being. being subjective. These findings reinforce the understanding that active aging should be promoted through spaces that encourage social interaction and individual empowerment.

elderly woman.

Another relevant aspect identified in the studies refers to the regular practice of activities.

Physical activity is a fundamental element for active aging. Evidence suggests that physical activity...

Physical activity contributes to the prevention of chronic non-communicable diseases, and to the maintenance of... functional capacity and for the reduction of depressive and anxious symptoms. In this sense, the literature It highlights that physical activity programs adapted to the conditions of the elderly population are strategies. effective in promoting health and independence, reducing the burden on health services.

(NERI, 2013).

With regard to public policies, the results demonstrate that the implementation of

Active aging depends on intersectoral and integrated actions. The Statute of the Elderly Person

This represents a significant step forward in ensuring rights related to health, transportation, and leisure.

and to social protection (BRAZIL, 2003). However, Camarano and Kanso (2017) emphasize that the existence

Legal provisions alone do not guarantee the achievement of active aging, since

Regional inequalities, limitations in access to public services, and insufficient resources persist.

Specific programs aimed at promoting the social participation of older adults.

The discussion also highlights that socioeconomic factors exert a direct influence on

The possibilities for active aging. Older adults with lower income and less education tend to

to face greater difficulties in accessing health services, cultural activities and spaces of

social participation. Therefore, active aging cannot be analyzed in a way

homogeneous, making it essential to consider the social inequalities that mark the trajectories of

The lives of individuals. As highlighted by Camarano (2014), population aging in Brazil

It occurs in a heterogeneous way, reflecting the country's historical inequalities.

Furthermore, the literature reviewed points to ageism as a significant obstacle for

The consolidation of active aging. Age-related prejudice reinforces stereotypes.

Negative aspects of old age are often associated with disability, dependency, and unproductivity. Debert

(2012) argues that such social representations limit opportunities for participation for the elderly.

and compromise their social visibility. Thus, confronting ageism emerges as a

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an essential condition for promoting active aging and for building a society
more inclusive.

Another relevant finding relates to the importance of lifelong learning as

This is a component of active aging. The participation of older adults in educational activities contributes...
for cognitive stimulation, for expanding social networks, and for strengthening autonomy.
This perspective reinforces the idea that active aging should be understood as a
a continuous process that begins before old age and extends throughout the entire course of life,
as proposed by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2005).

Thus, the results and discussion presented show that aging

Assets are not the sole responsibility of the individual, but the result of a collective effort.

It involves the state, society, and families. Promoting active aging implies investing in...

Effective public policies, combating social inequalities, and transforming social representations about
Old age, recognizing the elderly as subjects of rights and active participants in social life.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The accelerated process of population aging observed in recent decades demands
Contemporary society faces the need to rethink paradigms, social practices, and public policies.
aimed at the elderly population. In this context, active aging is consolidating itself as a
A fundamental approach to understanding aging not as synonymous with disability or
dependency, but as a stage of life marked by possibilities, social participation and exercise.
of citizenship. Throughout this study, it was possible to demonstrate that active aging constitutes
an essential strategy for promoting quality of life, autonomy and dignity of
elderly person.

Analysis of the literature demonstrated that active aging goes beyond the perspective
traditional biomedicine, by incorporating social, cultural, psychological and economic dimensions of
aging. In this way, aging actively is not limited to maintaining physical health, but
It involves access to opportunities for social participation, lifelong education, and security.
economic and favorable environments. This approach broadens the understanding of aging as
a heterogeneous process, influenced by life trajectories, social inequalities and by
historical context in which individuals are embedded.

Furthermore, the study showed that the achievement of active aging depends
directly from the formulation and implementation of intersectoral public policies, capable of articulating
Actions in the areas of health, social assistance, education, work, culture, and leisure. Although Brazil
Despite having important legal milestones, such as the Statute of the Elderly, challenges still persist.
related to social inequality, limited access to public services, and insufficient resources.

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Programs aimed at the inclusion and empowerment of the elderly population. These challenges reinforce the need for continuous investments and a collective commitment to ensure the fulfillment of rights guaranteed by law.

Another relevant aspect concerns the need to confront ageism, which... manifested through stigmas, prejudices, and discrimination associated with old age. These negative perceptions compromise the social participation of older adults and hinder the construction of... A truly inclusive society. Thus, promoting active aging also implies... to foster a cultural shift based on respect, valuing experience, and Strengthening intergenerational relationships.

In conclusion, learning to age is a challenge that transcends the individual and... It is configured as a shared social responsibility. Active aging should be understood as an investment in the present and the future, since it benefits not only the elderly population, but also society as a whole. By recognizing the elderly as protagonists of their own lives. With history and active involvement in social development, it becomes possible to build a more... fair, supportive, and prepared for an aging population, ensuring not only Longevity, but a life with quality, meaning, and dignity.

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