



Fitness Lifestyles, Dietary Patterns and Sleep Habit as Predictors of Graceful Ageing among Retired Civil Servants in Ibadan Metropolis

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Abstract:

The purpose of this study was to find out fitness lifestyle, dietary pattern and sleep habit as predictors of graceful ageing among retired civil servants in Ibadan metropolis. A descriptive design of survey type was adopted. The study population comprised 400 retired civil servants who were purposively sampled. Data were collected using a self developed validated questionnaire while frequency, percentage and chi-square (χ^2) were used for data analysis and statistical inference was set at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that adoption of fitness lifestyle, good dietary pattern and adequate sleep are significant predictors of graceful ageing. It was recommended that aged should not take much carbohydrate and protein for they do not expend the same level of energy as they did in early years. Participation in limited and regulated physical exercise and recreational activities will be of great benefits for their ageing body. Government should design educative programmes for the aged on special health needs that enhance fitness at old age.

Keywords: Aged, fitness lifestyle, sleep habit and dietary pattern

1. Introduction

Aged is synonymous with vulnerable, ancient, obsolete and senile, all of these are static terms and few carry desirable connotation, there are powerful and often inconsistent notion about what it means to grow old, care to know about old age is a recognition which has only recently surface from its prior state of pristine cultural embeddedness (Udoh, 2001, Moronkola and Okanlawon, 2003). Ageing successfully does not implying avoiding the problems, changes or losses that come with age, on the contrary, it means continually striving despite setback to maximize gains and minimize losses.

It is difficult to define or measure when one is old because of dynamic world in which we live. Being old changes as we examine it by the time studies are published condition have changed, new laws have been passed and view of old age have changed. Ageing starts right from one's birth till death and so one can say with confidence that growing means ageing because as one is growing, there is degeneration of the body tissue and organs. However, some people grow old faster depending on good diet, participation in limited exercise and other emotion and mental factors that are management factors (Brooks and Brooks, 1979, Morokonla, 2003).

Many people would like to live for a long time and never grow old, when we see that old age has taken us in its grip, we are stunned, however ageing does not begin on the sixty-fifty birthday and there is no precise age at which a person becomes “old” rather ageing is a normal process of development that occurs over the entire lifetime, if individual takes charge of his/her health during young adulthood, one can exert great control over the physical and mental aspect of ageing and can better handle body responses to events that might be out of control (Paul and Whalton, 1996).

World Health Organization (1998) explained that ageing is an integral natural part of life. The way in which we grow old and experience the process, our health and functional ability all depend not only on your genetic makeup but also important on what we have done during our lives, on what sort of things we have encountered in the course of our life time, on how and where we lived our lives.

As ones ages, increasing vulnerability needs to be acknowledge, with the continuing growth of elderly populations in modern societies, it has become imperative to look for ways to maintain and improve the functional abilities of ageing people, to help them cope independently in the community and ultimately, to raise the quality of their lives.

As ones grows older, muscles become weaker, less flexible and more susceptible to strain, pulls and cramps. After the mid 40s, strength usually decline. A man loses 10-20% of his maximum strength by age 60 and woman loses more other biological changes such as skin wrinkles, less secretion of acid in digestive system, dysfunction of the kidney, the heart pumps less blood with each beat and defence mechanism becomes less efficient (Oyerinde, 2004).

Nutrition as the science that deals with nutrients and other food substance as well as how the body assimilates them is perceived important as panacea for preventing disease. Adequate diet supplies all the necessary arsenal for fighting disease organisms that gain entrance into the body, therefore, no one needs adequate foods in terms of nutritional need the elderly. It is known that the activity level declines with age, so does the need and desire for food, therefore diets consumed by the elderly are more likely to provide insufficient amount of minerals and vitamins, efforts must be made to encourage intake of minerals such as calcium and iron and vitamins (A, D, C and B-complex) (Udoh, 2000).

Recommended daily intake of energy and nutrient for the United Kingdom – 1969

Sedentary men	Body wt (kg)	Real	MSC	Protein (gm)	Thiamin (mg)	Ricflavin (mg)	Nicutigic acid (mg)	Ascorbic acid (mg)	Vit. A (mg)	Vit. D (mg)	Calcium (mg)	Iron (mg)
18-35 yrs	65	2700	11.3	68	1.7	18	30	750		2.5	500	10
36-65 yrs	65	2600	10.9	65	1.7	18	30	750		2.5	500	10
65-75 yrs	63	2350	9.8	59	1.7	18	30	750		2.5	500	10

Extract from: Davison, Sir Hanley, Passmore, R. Brock, S.F. and Truswell, A.S. (1975) Human Nutrition and Dietics 6th ed. London: Churchill Living Stone, p.184.

The human body is like a machine and exercise keeps its various parts in good working order, fitness is affected favourably influences which attributes to or detract from all the functioning parts of the organism if its observed that the greatest costs of ageing is defining ability to perform daily chores, exercise has been worked upon as the single most effective anti-ageing pill ever discovered, this view was expressed at the end of a conference on the ‘role of exercise in preventing physical decline’ jointly sponsored by the National Institute of Ageing (NIA) and the Presidents’ Council for Physical Fitness and Sports, both of

the USA, the conference emphasized the fact that, *exercise benefits pulmonary and circulatory functions, helps preserve bones, maintains body weight, relieves depression and anxiety and enhances self esteem* (NIA 1999 in Udoh 2000 and Rao, 2004). Regarding physical activity, fitness and health of the aged, the study of Ibrahim (2006) revealed that naturally age brings about physical and physiological changes in the body that impede performance. The fact still remains that age limits people to participate in recreational activities. However, WHO (1998) identified six areas affected by physiological effort: body shape, bone strength, muscular strength, skeletal flexibility, motor fitness and metabolic fitness. Additional areas that benefit from physical activities are cognitive function, mental health and social adjustment. A greater degree of physical activity can help to prevent many of the negative effects ageing has on functional ability and health. Physical activity is also the best way to break the vicious circle and move on to a path of progressive improvement. It was further asserted that physical activities helps to improve stamina, balance, joint mobility, flexibility, agility, walking speed and overall physical coordination.

Physical activities also have favorable effects on metabolism, the regulation of blood pressure and the prevention of excessive weight gain. Thus, there is epidemiological evidence that regular exercise is related to decreased risk of cardiovascular diseases, osteoporosis, diabetes and cancers. Participation in recreational activities assists an individual in making personal and group adjustments including attitude band value formation as well as adjustment in the society, meanwhile, walking, callisthenic exercise at home, climbing staircase, cycling, swimming and some minor games such as playing cards, ludo, draught and scrabble are suggested fitness lifestyles for the aged.

As one grows old, sleep habit change with age, the impact of a five external situation upon a person is mediated by various factors like depression which is caused by inability to do what they were used to doing before, remembering sad events of the past and loneliness at home especially when all their children are no longer living with them affects their sleep patterns which invariably has implication on their health (Fakeye, 2001 and Oyerinde, 2004).

The elderly need to realize that sleep remain a natural therapy to restores both normal sensitivities of and normal balance among the statement parts of the central nervous system (CNS). It is also discovered that during sleep, arterial blood pressure falls, pulse rate decreases, skin vessels dilate, activity of the gastro intestinal tract sometimes increase, muscles fall into a completely relaxed state and overall nasal metabolic rate of the body falls by 10 to 30 percent (Laoye and Ackland, 1981, Udoh, 2000, Fakeye, 2001 and Oyerinde, 2004).

2. Hypotheses

- Ho₁:** Adequate diet will not be a significant predictor of graceful ageing among retired civil servants in Ibadan metropolis.
- Ho₂:** Limited exercise will not be a significant predictor of graceful ageing among retired civil servants in Ibadan metropolis.
- Ho₃:** Sleep habits will not be a significant predictor of graceful ageing among retired civil servants in Ibadan metropolis.

3. Methodology

The research design adopted for this study was descriptive design of survey type. It was found suitable based on the fact that it is useful for gathering data from a relatively large population and generalization can be made from sampled respondents. The population comprised all retired civil servants in Ibadan metropolis and the sample was four hundred (400) retired civil servants randomly sampled during their

monthly meeting at Oyo State Pension Boards Office, Agodi Ibadan. Convenient sampling technique was used to select (400) respondents based on first come first serve. Their consent was secured before participation in the study. The instrument used was a self develop validated questionnaire of 12 items with reliability co-efficient of 0.72. The data was analyzed with chi-square at 0.05 level of significance.

4. Results and Discussion

The results and discussion of the findings of this study are presented in accordance with the sequence of the hypotheses.

Ho₁: Adequate diet will not be a significant predictor of graceful ageing among retired civil servants in Ibadan metropolis.

Table 1: Chi-square table response on adequate diet and the aged

S/N	Items	Yes	No	Total %
1.	I consume only what I see than what I desire	310 (77.5%)	90 (22.5%)	400 (100%)
2.	I prefer food like amala, eba, pounded yam three times a day	365 (91.5%)	35 (8.5%)	400 (100%)
3.	I select appropriate savings form the two guide pyramid each day	70 (17.5%)	370 (82.5%)	400 (100%)

χ^2 observed = 49.6

Table value = 3.84

df = 2, 0.05 alpha level.

Table 1 indicated the observed χ^2 (49.6) which was greater than the table value of 3.84. the result of the χ^2 test therefore is significant thus giving the basis for rejecting the hypothesis which stated that adequate diet will not be a significant health need of the aged.

The result was also in line with the findings of Oyerinde (2004) who asserted that adequate diet supplies all the necessary arsenal for fighting disease organism that gain entrance into the body and no one need adequate diet than elderly. This is also corroborated by Udoh (2000) that efforts must be made by the aged to encourage intake of mineral such as calcium and iron and vitamins (like vitamin A, D, C and B complex).

Ho₂: Limited exercise will not be a significant predictor of graceful ageing among retired civil servants in Ibadan metropolis.

Table 2: Chi-square table response on limited exercise

S/N	Items	Yes	No	Total %
4.	I do exercise for muscle relaxation at least 2 days a week	280 (70%)	120 (30%)	400 (100%)
5.	I do exercise for flexibility at least three days a week	300 (75%)	100 (25%)	400 (100%)
6.	Exercises will elevate my heart rate, so I do not do it	202 (50.5%)	198 (49.5%)	400 (100%)
7.	I accumulate 30 minutes of moderate physical activity most days of the week (brisk walking, climbing the stairs, yard work or home chores	320 (80%)	80 (20%)	400 (100%)

χ^2 observed = 274.6

Table value = 25.99

df = 3, 0.05 alpha level.

Table 2 above indicates an observed χ^2 (274.6) against the table value of 25.99 at 0.05 alpha level 3 degree of freedom. This result clearly gives us the basis for rejecting the hypothesis. This was in line with the view of National Institute of Ageing (NIA) and the President Council for Physical Fitness and Sports (1999) that exercise benefit pulmonary and circulatory functions helps preserve bones, maintain body weight, relieve depression and anxiety and enhances self esteem. Paul and Walitin (1996), Fakeye (2001), Oyerinde (2004) findings likewise linked exercise as the single most effective ante-ageing pill ever discovered.

H₀₃: Sleep habits will not be a significant predictor of graceful ageing among retired civil servants in Ibadan metropolis.

Table 3: Chi-square table response on sleep habit

S/N	Items	Yes	No	Total %
8.	I got an adequate amount of sleep each night	90 (77.5%)	310 (22.5%)	400 (100%)
9.	I feel relax when sleeping	350 (87.5%)	50 (12.5%)	400 (100%)
10.	I enjoy sleep during the day than night	202 (50.5%)	198 (49.5%)	400 (100%)
11.	Sleep makes me forget worries or fears	280 (70%)	120 (30%)	400 (100%)
12.	Sleep keep me in good health than faking	365 (91.5%)	35 (8.75%)	400 (100%)

χ^2 observed = 339.2
 Table value = 3.84
 df = 4
 0.05 alpha level.

Table 3 shows 87.5% of the respondents said they feel relax when sleeping, while 70% also confirmed that sleep makes them forget about their worries and fears. However, since the calculated χ^2 value of 339.2 is greater than the table value of (3.84) the hypothesis is therefore rejected. This result is also in line with the view of Olaoye and Ackland (1981), Udoh (2000), Fakeye and Oyerinde (2004) that during sleep, arterial blood pressure falls, pulse rate decreases, skin vessels dilate muscles fall into a completely relaxed state and overall nasal metabolic rate of the body falls by 10 to 30 percent. This was corroborated by the submission of Morokonla and Okanlawon (2003) listing the needs of the elderly that keeping the house clean, good nutrition and a place to rest, sleep and be quite enabled them to cope with specific disabilities.

5. Conclusion

This paper has examined the special health needs for the aged and from all indications, it was revealed that good nutrition/adequate diet is a vital requirement for graceful old age. It was also revealed that exercise is a good anti-dote for aging body and taking adequate sleep will not only help their nasal metabolic rate of the body falls by 10 to 30 percent but it will help in making them forget their worries and fear. These three health needs are considered to be priority on these lifestyle, first they are behaviours that affects the lives of all people. Secondly, they are lifestyle in which large numbers of people can make improvement upon.

There is a need to call the aged , young adult, individuals to awareness of the special health needs required for the ageing process. This becomes important as it will make individual take charge of their health during young adulthood; also they will be able to exert great control over the physical and mental aspect of ageing and can better handle body responses to events that might be out of control, individual can shape a creative, graceful and even triumphant old age.

6. Recommendation

Based on the result of the findings, it is therefore recommended that:

- Aged should not take much carbohydrate and protein for the they do not expend the same level of energy as they did in early years.
- Also, regulated but limited exercise will be of great benefits to their ageing body.
- Government should design educative programme for the aged on special health needs and its positive implication on the aging processes.
- Those who have aged around them should not only leave them in isolation but monitor what they eat to prevent wrong dietary pattern.
- Also, people both young adult and old should see sleep as best option than taking medicine.

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