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Healthy Aging

Being able to perform activities of daily living was associated with greater chances of healthy aging, according to a study involving older adults, aged 60 years and above, published in *The International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*.¹

This study undertook to investigate the association between immigrant status and successful aging among older Canadians. For this, a team of Canadian researchers analyzed data of 7,651 persons, aged ≥ 60 years, who were a part of the Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging (CLSA) from 2015–2018. Of these, 1,446 were immigrants. All the study subjects were followed-up every 3 years for almost two decades or until death occurred. Participants who did not have memory problems or any chronic disabling pain or severe mental disease or any physical disability that restricted their daily activities. The other selection criteria were presence of adequate social support and positive emotional health (self-reported happiness and life satisfaction).²

Participants who were born in Canada were more likely to have successful aging compared to the immigrants with an adjusted odds ratio (aOR) of 1.24. Successful aging varied by the age of the participants. Among those aged 55–64 years at baseline, 76% had good health all through the duration of the study and their probability of healthy aging was higher, whereas 52% of those aged ≥ 80 years, were in good health.

Older adults with normal body weight had 24% higher chances of optimal aging compared to those who were obese. 74% of the study subjects living above the poverty line aged successfully versus 51% of those living below

the poverty line. Compared to current smokers and former smokers, the odds of being able to maintain good health were 46% higher among never smokers. Those who had no sleeping problems were 29% more likely to remain healthy. Similarly, chances of successful aging increased by 35 to 45% in older adults who participated in moderate to strenuous physical activity with aOR of 1.47. Subjects without arthritis were 65% more likely to have successful aging with aOR of 1.65.

This study has identified several features of health aging such as the ability to perform activities of daily living (ADL) including instrumental activities of daily living (IADL), absence of mental illness and memory problems, disabling chronic pain, adequate social support and self-reported perceptions of happiness and physical health. Younger age, being married and higher income status were also associated with successful aging. Hence, older adults should be encouraged to lead a healthy lifestyle. They should also be provided adequate social and mental support.

REFERENCES

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