Chapter 22
Factors Contributing to Ageing:
Factors in Ageing

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ABSTRACT
Ageing is related to problems in physical, emotional, and mental health. If we can delay the ageing process, we may be able to live more happily and successfully. Several factors are responsible for ageing: age, sleep, dietary habits, nutrition, physical activity, general health condition, emotional well-being, physical impairment, cultural factors, life events, social support, family well-being, financial resources, cognitive functioning, and diseases. The chapter is based on the above views and mainly focuses on the various factors that contribute to ageing.

INTRODUCTION
Ageing is the process of growing old, with a number of transitions in the journey of life. As they grow old their physical and mental capacities decline and they are not able to manage their life as good as they were doing it earlier. The transitions may include retirement, relocation, death of spouse or friends, geriatric syndromes such as frailty, decline in physical activity, problems with memory and so on. World Health Organization (WHO) states: “Active Ageing is the process of optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age” (WHO, 2002). Susan and Andrew (2016) defined ageing as “the process during which structural and functional changes accumulate in an organism as a result of the passage of time. The changes manifest as a decline in peak fertility and physiological functions, until death.” Ageing is challenging and at the same time full of opportunities. If the elderly is active, he can enjoy his life without perceiving himself as aged. The elderly can enjoy going out and meeting people more frequently, that he was not able to do it earlier, because of the preoccupation with his work. He can focus more on his hobbies or he can spend time with his grandchildren. It is to be specified here that there are factors that contribute to ageing and there are factors that delays ageing. In this chapter we will be focusing on the factors that contribute to ageing.

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Senescence and Ageing

Senescence is the progressive deterioration of cellular growth and decline in metabolic processes, through the passage of time. Senscence starts at the end of reproductive age and is also called as old age. Senescence is defined as reducing fertility and increasing the mortality (Monaco & Silveria, 2009). The concepts of aging is simply defined as the unavoidable passage of time, senescence the progressive physiologic impairment, and senility the pathological development of diseases (Monaco & Silveria, 2009).

There are several factors that contribute to ageing. These factors may be biological, lifestyle, social, psychological, spiritual, and cognitive and the diseases in the old age. These factors may not only lead to ageing but also to several diseases in the ageing process.

BIOLOGICAL FACTORS

Several biological factors like genetics, temperature, glycation, metabolism and oxidation affects the ageing process of humans.

Genetics

The genes of humans are genetically programmed for ageing. The human genes consist of a protein called rapamycin that has been responsible for regulation in ageing and growth (Rogers et al., 2016). There is genetic theory that longevity of life is determined by the longevity of their parents and grandparents and that identical twins have similar age span than fraternal twins (Rogers et al., 2016).

Metabolism and Oxidation

The metabolism plays an important role in the regulation of ageing and growth. Metabolism produces reactive chemicals or oxidizing agents that may increase the ageing process due to the damage in cells. (Bratic&Trifunovic,2010).

Wear and Tear

The cells of an organism are always getting damaged and worn out on daily basis. But, sometimes, permanent damage occurs to more or less permanent basis that these cannot be repaired easily, leading to ageing (Rogers et al., 2016).

OTHER PSYCHOPSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS

Lifestyle Factors

Lifestyle reflects the individual’s attitude, way of living, values, how to take care of self and how to view the world around him. Many of the lifestyles are the choices by individuals, but few others have physical or technical constraints to be followed (Spaargaren & VanVliet, 2000). Several lifestyle factors including