

Office of Geriatrics and Interprofessional Aging Studies
Topics in Gerontology Program
<http://aginged.osu.edu>

Topics in Gerontology is an online distance education program offered by The Ohio State University Office of Geriatrics and Interprofessional Aging Studies as continuing education and professional development opportunity. Each module is conveniently self-paced and self-directed. Modules include content enhanced by graphics such as charts, interactive activities such as case studies, videos, and links to resources that make the content "come alive." Each module also has a post-test, evaluation, and certificate of completion generated electronically once the post-test is completed. All modules meet the accessibility standards set forth by The Ohio State University.

Continuing Education

The number of credit hours earned by completing a module varies. Before release, each module goes through a pilot review process where the reviewers log the time it takes to complete the entire module. Continuing education hours are determined by averaging the time logged by the pilot testers for each module. Therefore, the average time it takes for a pilot tester to complete the module equals the number of continuing education credit hours accredited to that module.

Module Summary and Educational Objectives

Complementary and Alternative Therapies for the Older Adult

Credit Hours: 1.25 hours

Author: Patrice Rancour, MS, RN
Clinical Nurse Specialist

Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) has emerged as a legitimate field of inquiry during the last several decades. Years of research are currently yielding information as to its safety, efficacy, and applications.

Integrating CAM practices safely into the lifestyles of older adults is becoming increasingly important as surveys indicate that at least 2/3 of seniors use some CAM modality. Primarily, they tend toward being educated, white women with disposable incomes.

The most common forms of CAM used by older adults are bodywork, which focuses on physical interventions such as massage and chiropractic (45%), and herbal and dietary supplements (42%). "Integrative medicine" is becoming the recognized term to describe the integration of CAM with conventional western healing practices.

This module provides a brief overview of the field and its potential contribution to the lives of older adults.

Participants who complete this module will be able to:

1. Resolve the CAM case study.
2. Identify specific CAM practices for a variety of aging issues.
3. List the five domains of complementary and alternative therapy, as defined by the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine.
4. Describe complementary and alternative therapy and integrative medicine.

Health and Aging

Credit Hours: 1.0 hour

Author: Keith A. Anderson, MSW, Ph.D.

Associate Professor, College of Social Work, University of Montana

Although age alone does not cause disease and illness, as we get older, we are more likely to face health problems. In this module, you will learn about memory loss (dementia and Alzheimer's disease), stroke, heart disease, cancer, arthritis, falls, depression, and other health issues that can be of great concern to your older friends and family. You will learn the basics about each illness and condition, warning signs to look for, ways that people can help themselves, and ways that you can help them.

Participants who complete this module will be able to:

1. Learn about conditions and illnesses which commonly affect older adults.
2. Learn about possible warning signs of each condition or illness.
3. Identify ways that older adults can help themselves and how you can help older adults and their family members.

Is There an App For That? Nutrition, Fitness, and Aging

Credit Hours: 1.0 hour

Author: Sarah Rusnak, MS, RD, L.D.

Clinical Research Bionutritionist

There are thousands of applications and web services on the market. Those introduced here were chosen to illustrate the nature of the services available to older adults. The goal is to help you assess the many options available in our very quickly evolving health care environment and assist in introducing the older adults you serve to valuable information that will help them take added responsibility for their health and wellness.

This learning module is not an endorsement of any particular application or company, nor should any application be considered worse by its omission. Although applications and web services are beneficial, nothing should take the place of a consultation with a doctor and other healthcare professionals.

Participants who complete this module will be able to:

1. List potential uses of the application "mHealth" for older adults.
2. Support older adults in using mHealth applications specific to their concerns.
3. Compare and contrast additional health and wellness applications appropriate for older adults.

Issues of Abuse and Neglect in the Aging Population

Credit Hours: 1.0 hour

Author: Keith A. Anderson, MSW, Ph.D.

Associate Professor, College of Social Work, University of Montana

Although many older adults experience their older years with supportive interactions with family and friends, some are subjected to challenging issues such as elder abuse, financial abuse, and loss of independence. This module will share warning signs and strategies for addressing many of the concerning issues that may come with aging. Participants who complete this module will be able to:

1. Identify five ways in which older adults can be exploited.
2. Learn possible warning signs of elder abuse and neglect.
3. Identify ways that older adults can help themselves and the ways that you can help older adults.

Myths and Realities of Aging

Credit Hours: 1.0 hour

Author: Keith A. Anderson, MSW, Ph.D.

Associate Professor, College of Social Work, University of Montana

Each of us experiences aging in individual and unique ways. However, there are some everyday realities of aging that are important to know as we approach our later years, just as there are some myths that have been perpetuated. This module will help you distinguish between the myths and realities.

Participants who complete this module will be able to:

1. Distinguish myths versus reality regarding the physical aspects of aging.
2. Understand the myths and realities of aging with regard to cognitive and mental status.
3. Understand the stereotypes associated with an aging population.

Sexuality in Later Life

Credit Hours: 1.0 hour

Author: Keith A. Anderson, MSW, Ph.D.

Associate Professor, College of Social Work, University of Montana

Sexuality in later life has long been a taboo topic, rarely discussed and mostly unappreciated. While this may be true, we know that older adults can remain sexually active across the later years of life and that sexuality can be an essential component of overall life satisfaction. In this module, we will examine the myths and realities of sexuality in later life, explore definitions, facts, and figures, and learn about the physical and psychosocial factors that impact sexuality in later life. We will also look at ways that we can help older adults to continue to express their sexuality with dignity, privacy, and confidence.

Participants who complete this module will be able to:

1. Discuss ways that we can help older adults express their sexuality and continue to remain sexually active in later life.
2. Explore special populations of older adults and special issues related to sexuality.
3. Understand how physical and psychosocial changes associated with aging impact sexuality in later life for women and men.
4. Learn about the myths, facts, and realities regarding sexuality in later life.

The First 24 Hours: An Unfolding Case Study in Person-Directed Care

Credit Hours: 1.5 hours

Author: Amy Elliot, Ph.D.

This module demonstrates approaches to person-directed care in the nursing home environment. The goal of this unfolding case is to illustrate how systems to support person-directed care in a resident's first 24 hours in a nursing home have a positive impact on a resident's overall outcomes. In particular, the module highlights recently developed person-directed competencies for medical directors, nurses, and nursing home administrators, and offers strategies for putting person-directed care into practice in daily operations. The presentation of this module is a collaboration between Pioneer Network and The Ohio State University Office of Geriatrics and Interprofessional Aging Studies.

Participants who complete this module will be able to:

1. Consider implementation factors for the replication of person-directed culture in nursing home settings.
2. Analyze the unfolding case study.
3. Define the roles of the medical director, nurse, and nursing home administrator in the nursing home environment.
4. Describe the continuum of person-directed culture.
5. Understand the differences between an institution-directed culture and a person-directed culture.

A Sight for Sore Eyes: Age-Related Eye Disease

Credit Hours: 1.0 hour

Author: Prevent Blindness

In 2011 the first of the baby-boomers turned 65, and by 2030 the last of the baby-boomers generation will turn 65. This vast number of baby-boomers and longer life spans will give rise to a doubling of the current aging population. As a result, we expect to see a significant increase in chronic diseases and conditions, including a substantial increase in eye disease in the U.S. and throughout the world.

This module is intended to educate you about how the eye functions, age-related diseases commonly affect the eye, and risk factors for eye disease.

Participants who complete this module will be able to:

1. Learn how the eye functions and about aging eye anatomy.
2. Recognize common age-related eye diseases, including risks, symptoms, and treatments.
3. Understand how eye disease affects the quality of life of older adults.

Caring for the Aging LGBT Population

Credit Hours: 1.5 hours

Author: John Davis, Ph.D., M.D.

Associate Dean of Medical Education

University of California, San Francisco School of Medicine

The purpose of this module is to familiarize you with the unique health care needs of the aging LGBT community. We hope that after completion of this module, you will be more comfortable when caring for older adults who identify as LGBT.

As the LGBT equality movement gains momentum in the United States, more and more of the population is willing to come out and identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender. In 1994, 2.8% of men and 1.4% of women identified as LGBT, and by 2002, nearly 4.1% of men and 4.1% of women identified as LGBT. It is estimated that by 2030, there will be 2-6 million elderly LGBT in the United States; likely, one of your patients or clients will indeed identify as an LGBT elder.

This population has faced a great deal of discrimination in the past, specifically concerning health care equality. In light of the HIV/AIDS epidemic of the 1980s, many older members of the LGBT population have negative perceptions of health care. Despite significant advances in LGBT rights, specific discriminatory practices still exist that create significant barriers to quality health care for this group. As a result, there are special considerations that should be taken into account when providing care for older LGBT adults. Through recognizing the specific needs of this community, care professionals can work with older LGBT adults and certain community entities to ensure that aging LGBT adults receive the proper support and care to enjoy a healthy senior life.

Participants who complete this module will be able to:

1. Recognize how the history of inequality towards the LGBT population may affect their perception of health care today.
2. Identify current barriers to quality health care that exist for the aging LGBT community.
3. Describe the unique health care needs of the aging LGBT population.
4. Consider specific strategies care professionals can utilize to ensure quality health care to this particular population.

Eyes Wide Open: Preventing Vision Loss

Credit Hours: 1.0 hour

Author: Prevent Blindness

The growth of the aging population and, subsequently, the increase in the incidence of vision loss and blindness will greatly tax our current health care system. Because of this, we expect to see formal and informal caregivers play a larger role in caring for our older population in the coming years. In this module, you will learn about preventing vision loss, eye care benefit options other than employee health care, and how to become more involved in advocating for eye care services for older adults. We hope this module will illustrate to you the importance of eye care and encourage you to become an advocate for preventive eye care in your field of work, with your family and friends, and of course, help you improve your eye health!

Participants who complete this module will be able to:

1. Explain how to prevent eye disease through lifestyle changes.
2. Describe the eye care benefits available to older adults.
3. Learn how to advocate for healthy eye care for older adults.

Understanding Younger-Onset Alzheimer's Disease

Credit Hours: 2.0 hours

Author: Allison Gibson, MSW, Ph.D.,
Associate Professor, College of Social Work, University of Kentucky

Nearly 5.4 million Americans are living with Alzheimer's disease. While most individuals are diagnosed after the age of 65, 4-10% have a form of the disease called Younger Onset Alzheimer's disease (YOAD), also known as Early-Onset Alzheimer's. This specialized population of older adults has unique needs, as YOAD affects these families differently from those diagnosed with traditional Alzheimer's. Families are coping with YOAD experience familial problems, psychosocial challenges, and financial and employment difficulties different from their peers diagnosed with conventional Alzheimer's disease. We will cover these topics in this Module and look at how these issues will affect families as their loved one's age into late adulthood.

Participants who complete this module will be able to:

1. Understand the disease, its prevalence, risk factors, and symptoms associated with younger-onset Alzheimer's disease.
2. Understand how younger-onset Alzheimer's disease impacts individual and family relationships, roles, and supportive service needs.
3. Explore the needs of caregivers for persons with younger-onset Alzheimer's disease.
4. Discuss ways that we can help improve services and supports for individuals with younger-onset Alzheimer's disease and their family members.

Cancer and the Older Adult

Credit Hours: 2 hours

Author: Janine Overcash, Ph.D., GNP-BC

Director of Nursing Research

James Comprehensive Cancer Center

According to the American Cancer Society, more than 1.6 million new cancer diagnoses are expected in the year 2012, with men (about 300,000) being diagnosed more often than women (about 275,000). As you can see, cancer is a very prevalent disease in the U.S. However, did you know that cancer is a disease of aging? About 77% of all cancers diagnosed in the U.S. are in persons 55 years old or older (American Cancer Society, 2012).

This module will explore how life expectancy, functional status, and comorbidity determine treatment in the older person with a cancer diagnosis and how cancer behaves differently in older people.

Participants who complete this module will be able to:

1. Learn what assessment instruments enhance oncology care for the older patient.
2. Describe why cancer behaves differently in older adults.
3. Learn what determines treatment in the older cancer patient.
4. Understand why cancer is a disease of aging.

Falls and the Older Adult

Credit Hours: 2.0 hours

Author: Jennifer S. Browning, MS, RN, ANP-BC

Certified Nurse Practitioner, Palliative Medicine, OSU Wexner Medical Center

A common and dangerous problem falls is among the most serious issues facing our aging population. Given that the worldwide population is aging like never before, the field of falls prevention and protection is growing. The good news is that we know that falls are not a normal part of aging. Therefore we know that falls can be prevented, and older adults can and deserve to live a healthy, independent life.

This module is intended to give you information on why older adults fall and a glimpse into the process of prevention, care, and treatment for the older adult that falls and is at risk for falling.

Participants who complete this module will be able to:

1. Define the extent of the problem of older adults falling.
2. Identify physical, mental, and environmental risk factors for falling.
3. Identify and describe how age-related skeletal changes can affect an older adult's risk of falling.
4. Recognize common chronic conditions and syndromes that increase risk factors for falling.
5. Become familiar with the patient history and physical exam used by clinicians for assessing fall risk in the older patient.

Frailty and the Older Adults

Credit Hours: 1.0 hour

Author: Donald Mack, MD, FAAFP, CMD

Clinical Assistant Professor of Family Medicine, OSU Wexner Medical Center

Frailty has been defined as a geriatric syndrome characterized by increased vulnerability due to loss of reserves and resilience. Frail elders are more prone to falls, disability, hospitalization, and mortality. As the U.S. population older than 65 years approaches 15% in 2015, the number of frail older adults will also be increasing. Improved skills in the identification and treatment of frail elders will be vital. This module will provide insight into the definition of frailty while identifying and describing some of the treatments and interventions appropriate for the older adults you care for.

Participants who complete this module will be able to:

1. Define frailty in detail.
2. List the components of frailty.
3. Identify and describe some of the treatments and interventions for frailty.

Optimizing Medication Management for Older Adults

Credit Hour: 1.0 hour

Author: Ruth Emptage, PharmD, CGP

The Ohio State University College of Pharmacy

Medications are a useful tool to help treat and prevent disease in older adults. However, many factors make it more complicated to balance the benefits versus the potential risks of medication use in this population. This module will provide a general overview of ways to optimize medication use in older adult patients.

Physiologic changes as the body ages and its effect on medications are essential to understand to make appropriate therapeutic decisions for the older adult patient. Potentially inappropriate medications for the older adult patient are crucial to keeping in mind to avoid medication-related problems. The usefulness of a comprehensive medication list (as well as electronic resources for keeping such a list) is a valuable way for the patient to prevent medication issues. Medication adherence in older adults, and ways to improve medication adherence will also be discussed in the module.

Participants who complete this module will be able to:

1. Gain an appreciation for the need to recognize and prevent adverse drug events in the older adult population.
2. Become familiar with the different categories of "Beer's Criteria for Potentially Inappropriate Medications" in the older adult.
3. Define pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics.
4. Appreciate the necessary components of a Comprehensive Medication List as a tool to avoid medication-related problems for older adults.
5. Define medication adherence issues, and the barriers to medication adherence, in the older adult population.
6. Become familiar with the available tools to evaluate and decrease the likelihood of nonadherence.