

Successful aging

1. Definition:

According to JW Rowe, successful aging includes three main components: low probability of disease and disease-related disability, high cognitive and physical functional capacity, and active engagement with life ^[1], which corresponds to physical condition, mental condition and social condition.

2. Opinion:

Considering there are a thousand understanding of success in a thousand's eye, it seems difficult to define what successful aging is in detailed quantifiable standards. So Ann Bowling and his colleagues undertook a systematic literature review for existing models of the constituents of successful ageing from the social, psychological, and medical sciences and tried to find out the common part. Here is their definition based on the reviewing result ^[2]:

1) Theoretical definitions

- Life expectancy
- Life satisfaction and wellbeing (includes happiness and contentment)
- Mental and psychological health, cognitive function
- Personal growth, learning new things
- Physical health and functioning, independent functioning
- Psychological characteristics and resources, including perceived autonomy, control, independence, adaptability, coping, self-esteem, positive outlook, goals, sense of self
- Social, community, leisure activities, integration and participation
- Social networks, support, participation, activity

2) Additional lay definitions

- Accomplishments
- Enjoyment of diet
- Financial security
- Neighbourhood
- Physical appearance
- Productivity and contribution to life
- Sense of humor
- Sense of purpose
- Spirituality

As a proposal, data mining could also be used to help to define the “successful aging”.

[1] John W. Rowe et al. Successful Aging. (1997)

[2] Ann Bowling et al. What is successful ageing and who should define it? (2005)