HONR 19902: Week 4 Recitation Individual Assignment

**Haley Brouwer**

1) Have you been thinking about how long you may live? What was your reaction to the life expectancy age calculated for you?

I have thought about how long I will live before this class. I am slightly ashamed to admit that I was (and still am) not looking forward to the number of candles on the cake to keep increasing. While it may be a stereotype or even erroneous through and through, I still believe that younger is better than older. I have type one diabetes and have heard that individuals with diabetes on average live approximately ten years less than an equally healthy person without diabetes. Thus, I was very surprised that my life expectancy was 98 years of age even though the calculator asked about diabetes. I suppose that it took into account expected health care advances in the future that may effectively treat or cure diabetes. One final thought, the calculator did not ask very many questions about other health conditions or diseases, which I think may have also falsely inflated my life expectancy.

2) What are the implications of your estimated longevity in terms of your health and income needs? If you live to be 120, would you want to retire in your 60s?

I need to make sure that I have enough capital saved and smartly invested to meet all my needs and wants until my death. It would be incredibly unfortunate to be broke in old age. If I really do live to 98, I will need to estimate all costs of living, plan for unforeseen emergencies, and account for inflation when deciding how much I would need to have saved before retiring. To answer the specific question, retiring halfway through my lifespan would probably not be smart planning for my future. Right now, however, I don’t expect to retire. I think that I would be too bored or just waste the last years of my life not accomplishing anything. My goal is to work until physically incapacitated.

3) What preventive steps might you take now to extend your lifespan and improve the quality of your health?

Being in the best health now and maintaining those practices throughout my life will extend my lifespan. Continuing my regular exercise routine, limiting fats and sugar in my diet, carefully monitoring my blood sugar and A1C, and constantly engaging my brain should help with the aging process and my health. Having a job with fantastic health insurance would help too.

4) What are you looking forward to about getting older? What are you not looking forward to?

I am looking forward to advance in my chosen career and gaining a reputation as an experienced engineer who knows her stuff. Mostly, though, I am dreading the increased possibility of physical and mental ailments. If the previously mentioned are bad enough, a lack of independence. I’m especially afraid of losing driving privileges when I am older. Currently, my vision is terrible, and it’s not going to improve over time. I hope I don’t get Alzheimer’s or another form of dementia or any other disease that might impair my mental cognition. My great-grandmother had a stroke a few years after I was born and she spent the last twelve years of her life not being able to speak or control her body well. I don’t want that to happen to me.

5) How might people describe you when you’re about 65 years old?

I expect to still be working, maybe an executive at bioengineering or genetics company. I would also like to have allot some time once I’ve proved myself at work for continuing education, learning new skills. Specifically, I want to learn at least one other foreign language (German?). I will probably be married, definitely without children. So I won’t be a huggable, cookie-baking grandmother by this time (or ever). Thus, people might describe me as driven, focused, wealthy, experienced, knowledgeable, and diversified. Hopefully, not ill. Or dead.

**Eleanor Carre**

1. I suppose I think a lot about my immediate future – my next year in college, what career I hope to gain when I leave college, beginning a family, etc. However, I haven’t really pondered how long my life actually will be. It’s weird to be told a limit on your life, even if 95 years does seem long compared to some people’s lives. Ninety-five seems long, since it is greater than the average life expectancy, so I feel somewhat excited that I might live so long. However, it also makes my life seem like such a small and trivial matter when those 95 years are compared to the thousands of years that have existed.
2. The longer you live, the more money you will need to support yourself. Therefore, it is probably not the best idea to retire at age 60 if you will live to be 120. If your estimated longevity is high, then you will have to extend other aspects of your life. You may have to work for a longer period of time; or your health may need to be managed with a higher concern for a longer period of time.
3. In order to extend my lifespan, I should monitor my lifestyle choices early on in my life. For example, I should strive to eat a healthy diet and maintain a balance of physical activity/exercise. Personally, I need to discover ways by which I can relieve and healthily maintain my stress; mental health is significant in addition to physical health.
4. When I think about older people, I think of my grandparents and mentors at my church. I look forward to family from a different perspective. Since I still have not yet begun my own family, there are many viewpoints of a family that I have not experienced yet. However, my grandparents are always so happy to see my brothers and parents and I cannot wait to be a grandparent, to find so much joy in my family’s younger generations. Now-a-days, I treasure the wisdom that the older generations give me. I am excited for the day that I am able to pass on my wisdom and experiences.
5. This question is amusing to me simply because I am known to my friends as an “old soul”. I love to knit, listen to soft music, read, and encourage others. I treasure humor of the past and value older ideals. So I’d imagine some people may describe me as similar to how I am now, just possibly with a few more wrinkles. This question also reminds me of my honors course last semester: identity. Our class discussed how, as people, we generally like to believe that we won’t change over time; however, we usually do. I answered that I could see people saying that I will be very similar to how I currently am; and I hope I do remain similar. However, how people and myself THINK I will be like and how I actually will be may be different. Our identity is comprised of experiences (environment) and genes – very much like aging. (I may have strayed a little from the question, but I think the overlapping of themes is very, very neat. )

**Patrick Weihmann**

1. I personally have not given much thought into how long I will actually live. Upon viewing the results of the life expectancy calculator, I was not surprised. The age calculated for me, from an average of the two tests was 78. This value is fairly average for the US population, and for me seems like a reasonable prediction given how I am not exactly a health guru or gym buff.
2. Given the age calculated for death, I would say normal retirement age is suitable for ceasing full-time employment. While working, time passes by quickly; however, not doing as much as before would make time pass by a lot more slowly. I figure that a good fifteen years after retirement will be enough for me, unless I manage to retain good health and actually do a lot of activities (travelling, community work, etc.). In that case, I do not think I would be done just quite yet.
3. The main factors for improving my predicted life expectancy are easily diet and exercise. Whenever I have academic or work related obligations, there is not much time to fit into going to the gym four days a week. It is possible, but would require strong time commitment and discipline. I think the first step would be to force myself to get in the routine of doing intense physical activities on a weekly basis. As for diet, I can only make do with what the dining courts offer. By the time I graduate, however, I think I will be responsible enough to buy food that is healthy. I naturally prefer a lot of healthy foods anyway, but I was basing the survey questions based on my present situation.
4. I am looking forward to the relief of having no stress and time to have by myself. I am a very introverted person, so the loss of commitments and responsibilities I am expected to have will give me more time to pursue passions I’ve always wanted to do. For example, I think it would be amazing to travel across the world after I retire for an extended period of time. What I wouldn’t enjoy so much is the loss of physical ability that accompanies age. I am all for extra free time, but walking with a cane or losing cognitive functioning isn’t that appealing.
5. To be honest, I see myself as being a stereotypical recluse who comes out maybe twice a year to yell at children playing on my front lawn. It is odd for me because I already like spending a fair amount of time alone. Everyone who knows me well is aware of that. That is not to say I’d have a general apathy for everything. Despite having oodles of alone time, I’d probably spend the rest of it with family or close friends. The few friends I would have would see me in a different light: someone who likes to speak foreign languages, cook, and explore nature. I like to think of my future self as the main character from UP. Though superficially a scrooge, deep down there is a desire to explore the world and acquire knowledge.

**Regan Overholt**

1. Prior to taking this course, I had given a small amount of thought to how long I may live. Four of my eight great-grandparents were still living when I was born, and the three that I have had a relationship with are still with us. My paternal grandfather’s parents, Mary and Lloyd, are both still living. They are 94 and 95 years old. My great-grandpa’s sister Hellen is the oldest of the eleven children. She will turn 104 years old in May. Because of my grandparent’s age and that of their siblings, I had given some thought to the possibility of me living to be their age. I took both quizzes and one predicted living to 90 years old and the other 100 years old. I was not entirely surprised to see such high number seeing as I have little family history of disease. Still, at 19, it is hard to imagine my life 80 years from now. It is almost impossible to wrap my mind around the idea that I may live the length of my life thus far four more times.
2. Living for so long would definitely have an economic impact. If I lived to be 90 or 100, I think that I would still like to retire in my sixties. I don’t think that I would stop working or being active, but devote my time to different activities. I have a passion for volunteering and helping my community. I like the idea of spending my older years volunteering and traveling. However, this would require saving a lot of what is earned during my working years. I am naturally a saver, so I think this would be natural for me to do. Even if I do not live long enough to need the savings, I would be happy to donate it or pass it to my family members in my older age. I hope to be able to remain healthy and will take necessary steps to have the best possible chance of remaining in good health.
3. To maintain health for many years, I believe that the body must be taken care of holistically. It is important to eat a healthy diet, stay physically active, and grow in spiritual and interpersonal relationships. Currently, I am trying to do these things. I make time to exercise with the hopes of remaining healthy and active for many years to come. However, I think that it is also important not to beat yourself up over failures. I typically eat a healthy diet, but also love to eat strawberry ice cream. By taking care of my body and enjoying life, I hope to live to the fullest no matter how long that may be.
4. In the relatively near future (next ten years or so) I am looking forward to being able to work as a pharmacist, get married, and hopefully raise a family. As I age, I look forward to the wisdom and sincere relationships that I hope to have. I look forward to being a mother and a grandmother because mine have had such an amazing impact on my life. However, I have also seen the negative side of aging. Two years ago my maternal grandfather lost his battle with dementia and other health issues. I was hard to watch his health deteriorate and is part of what motivated me to take steps to stay healthy at a young age. I do not look forward to potential health issues, memory loss, or the loss of autonomy that often comes as one ages.
5. I hope that when I am 65 years old, people will be able to describe me as a happy, inspirational and caring woman. I have had many stellar examples of these traits in women that I look up to and hope that I may be described in similar ways when I am of an older age. One of the things I value most is selflessness. It can be difficult to show, especially when the college experience is so often self-centered. I hope that it is something I can improve on as I age and someday be described as.

**KATHRYN ATHERTON**

1. I’ve never thought much about how long I might live; I’ve really only ever hoped that I would live long enough to accomplish everything I’ve dreamed of, which is a lot. I’ve never really put a number on it, however. So when I took the age calculations, I wasn’t expecting or hoping for a certain range, and felt pretty neutral about the number that came back. Again, all I hope is that it’s enough time to accomplish everything that I want to do in life. Although it’s cliche, age is just a number, and what really matters is how you spend your time rather than how much you get.
2. As long as I am passionate about what I am doing, I don’t think I could retire at age 60, no matter how old I live to be. Whether I am still in the workforce or doing volunteer work related to my career, I hope that I will still be active in my passions in my later years. Financially, however, I believe that I will always be saving for emergencies and my retirement, and I think that I wouldn’t be able to let myself retire until I feel that I can live comfortably with what I have saved.
3. I have been exercising and eating healthy regularly, and I have always avoided risky behaviors and habits that might damage my health. As I get older, I know that I will have to get regular checkups for various health issues that are in my family, such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and colon cancer.
4. In the more immediate future, I look forward to starting my career and starting a family, but in the more distant future, I am looking forward to being able to do what I want every single day, whether that is going to work or volunteer, having a day with my family, or just being able to curl up with a good book all day. Ever since I started going to school, my days have been planned out for me, between classes and activities and sports practices, and as my career begins, I will have to schedule my work and family in a similar manner. I’m not looking forward to getting colonoscopies. My mother currently has to have them done, as her father died of colon cancer, and the process that must be done the day before is awful. She has to fast all day and drink this liquid every so often that tastes disgusting. Then, if she is even able to keep it all down, she has to go to the doctor the next day. If not, the process was all for nothing, and she has to try again a few weeks later. I am definitely not looking forward to having to get that done every few years, even though it is beneficial to my health.
5. When I am 65 years old, I hope that people describe me as a fun, yet hard-working person. I am both of these things now and I would like to think that I won’t change much as I grow up. I would also like to think that people will describe me as inspirational. I really hope to be able to make a difference in my career, my community, and my family. I hope that I will grow up to be someone that many girls my age and younger aspire to be like.

**Alex Busker**

1. Recently, I have been thinking about how long I will live. I have not considered it much before, but now that we have been learning about aging and what affects longevity, I have been thinking about it more. Previously, when people would ask me how long I think I will live, I would say 104 years because then I would have lived to see the next century (I was born in 1996). My estimated life expectancy from the calculator was 90 years. It might not be 104, but all things considered living for 90 years is still a pretty long life.
2. In terms of my income needs, I do not think it would be reasonable to retire in my sixties. That would still leave me with twenty to thirty years of living left, but with no incoming cash flow. I would probably end up having to try and find a new job, which, frankly, is harder to do the older you get. More importantly though, I would be incredibly bored with nothing to do for some twenty odd years. In terms of health needs, my main concern would be my contacts. I do not have medication that I need to take all the time, but if I do not have contacts, I will be in trouble.
3. Preventative steps I could take now to extend my life expectancy would be to eat healthier. I am the type of person to get a cookie with my meal, eat it first (because what if something happens while I am eating and I do not get to finish my meal; I want to make sure I have at least had my dessert), and then grab another one to eat as I walk out the door. Also, I really am not a vegetable person, so I typically avoid those at all costs. But broccoli is not that bad; I could invest in more broccoli (as long as it is not raw). Eating healthier would probably give me more energy, too. It is always nice to have lots of energy, so that I do not have to take as many naps during the day.
4. What I am looking forward to most about growing older is becoming more knowledgeable about things. Not on anything specific; just more knowledgeable in general. They say that the older you get the more wisdom you have. When I die, I want to be a wise old lady. What I am not looking forward to about growing older is having to make decisions for myself. I can barely decide which pair of fuzzy socks I want to put on in the morning, let alone what type of insurances to get or which house to buy. I also am not looking forward to having to pay large amounts of money for things. I am not counting college tuition because the fact that I have to pay $40,000 a year to get an education, to get a job, to work for the rest of my life, to pay off that $40,000 a year still has not fully hit me yet. I mean things like buying a new car or a house. I do not even like paying extra for brand name cereals, let alone things I will have to deal with and look at for several years to come.
5. When I am 65 years old, I would hope people would describe me in terms of my personality and not about my decomposing physical appearance. I feel like a lot of people would look at a 65 year old woman and be like “OMG would you look at those wrinkles”, but I would hope people would refer to my personality. Earlier, I said I would like to be more knowledgeable and wise when I get older, but other than that, I would be fine if I did not change much else. If people were to describe me for the most part in the exact same way when I am 65 as they would now, I think that would be okay.

**Davis Dunn**

1. Until I took this class, I never thought about how long I live. I had always figured I would live until some time between 65 to 90 but never really concerned myself with it until recently. When I saw that my expected age was 84, I was not too surprised. It made me begin to think about how long that seems and how much can happen in the time between now and then. Honestly, it did not bug me or affect me that much.
2. If I were to actually live to 84, I would probably want to retire later so that I can actually take of myself in old age. Though I never see myself fully stopping work, I would probably stop working as many hours in my 70s rather than fully retiring in my 60s. If I were to live to 120 and knew it ahead of time, I would not retire until I was in my 90s, because I would need to sustain myself for longer and would like to stay busy and involved for as long as possible. I would also probably want to save more money on top of working more so that I could afford to enjoy myself in my retirement.
3. I think that now I will make sure that my blood pressure stays at low levels. All of the men on my father’s side, regardless of weight or other health factors, seem to suffer from high blood pressure. I will probably start taking more steps to keep my blood pressure low as I age by doing things like exercising, eating healthier, etc. Another step I my take is to make sure that I do not do not develop back problems by regularly having a doctor check up, as back problems also run in my family.
4. I am looking forward to relaxing in a quiet area and getting away from the noise and traffic of populated areas. I would think that once I retire/scale back my workload I will be able to have more options about where I live. The other thing I am looking forward to is being able to have time to spend on my hobbies and getting to pick when I work and do stuff. What I am most excited about is having more time for friends and family. On the other hand, I am not looking forward to the idea of watching my friends die at an increasing rate. The idea of possibly needing to rely on other people for help also bugs me, although that is not necessarily guaranteed to happen. Finally, I think that having too much free time in retirement may cause me to become depressed if I don’t make an effort to stay occupied.
5. When I am 65 years old I expect that people will describe me as “active” or “involved,” or possibly even “hard-working.” I expect to be involved in my community and still be working- albeit at reduced hours- at that age, because I likely would want to stay active for as long as possible. i also hope people talk about me more in terms of what I’d done in the past several years as a worker rather than describing my accomplishments of when I was younger. I am always bugged whenever people talk about an older person and only describe the work they’ve done when they were young. To me, that always seems like they are already dead and that people are talking about their achievements, and seems dismissive and depressing to the person they are talking about. It seems like they are saying the person is no longer relevant or important. Hopefully this won’t be a problem when I am 65 because I plan to still be working, but plans can change in 40+ years. In general, I think people will describe me like they would a 45 year old who is still working, as I will still be involved in my community and working a job, but clearly not a young person and not being what people would expect an older person to be like.

**Hadley Whicker**

1. As a result of the topics in this course, I have been thinking more about how long I will live, although, I try not to think about it too much because I tend to freak myself out about it, which is pointless there is no real way to know if I will live for another day or another hundred years. I was initially pleasantly surprised at the life expectancy age calculated for me, which were 94 and 89, however, upon further consideration, I am not surprised at the ages. I try to maintain a healthy lifestyle, as does most of my family, so I am at a lower risk of a number of things that contribute to premature death, although I do feel as though the calculators did make it easy to overestimate my life expectancy age.
2. Due to the fact that I am estimated to live longer than most, I will have to keep myself healthier for longer and make wise financial decisions in order to lead the type of life that I hope to. I would be very reluctant to rely on other for physical or financial help, so I will need to keep my future in mind when making choices that could affect on my physical and financial stability in the long term. If I were to live to 120, I would definitely not want to retire in my 60s, as long as I am healthy. Even if I didn’t like my current career path in my 60s, I would still have almost half of my lifetime to go back to school and change career paths. While this wouldn’t be very easy, it would keep me active and give me a purpose in life, which would improve my overall well-being in my later years.
3. The most beneficial preventative step I could take in order to extend my life expectancy and improve the quality of my health would be to maintain a healthier diet. I am pretty good about working out and staying active, however, I eat far more processed junk food than I would like to admit. I should also work on decreasing my stress level. Most of the time, I have a healthy stress level, but every once in awhile, I get very overwhelmed. I can decrease the amount of times that I become very overwhelmed by procrastinating less and getting myself more organized
4. The thing I am most looking forward to about growing older is having a family of my own and watching my kids grow up. I am also really looking forward to developing a career, no matter how scary it seems right now. The idea of my body slowing down is the thing that I am least looking forward to. I really enjoy being active and on the move, so the thought of not being able to do that as much is something that I dread.
5. I hope that when I’m 65 people still describe me as they would today, although with maybe a few less negatives that I will have improved upon over the years. I want people to see me as an active person that is always willing to help and love others no matter the circumstances. I hope to be a little more patient and understanding, to the point that others can see that in me. I also hope that people would describe me as someone who lives out their faith through their actions.