

Aging and Dying



Dharah Puck Cordeiro Ferreira Bispo*

Department of Neuropsychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Pernambuco Federal University of Pernambuco, Brazil

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***Corresponding author:** Dharah Puck Cordeiro Ferreira Bispo, Department of Neuropsychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Pernambuco Federal University of Pernambuco, Av. Prof. Moraes Rego, 1235 – Cidade Universitária, Recife/PE, Brazil, CEP: 50670-901, Brazil

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Mini Review

The process of aging and dying is intrinsic to all human beings. With the increase in the life expectancy of the world population, which was previously observed only in developed countries, there was an accentuation of these two processes, as well as a paradigm shift [1,2]. This change in paradigm is related to the new demands caused by the aging process, because with this there is an increase in some of the subject's weaknesses, among which are the incapacitating and incurable chronic-degenerative diseases common to aging, corresponding to 34 million of deaths per year in the world totaling 58 million deaths [3-5]. Over time, the prognosis of the disease causes secondary complications due to the presence of physical signs and symptoms compromising the elderly in all areas, like psychological, social and economic, disabling and decreasing quality of life [6]. Some require assistance in carrying out the daily life activities, which can range from a simple aid, such as moving to a room in the house, to a more complex and continuous one, such as help during personal hygiene [7]. Thus, the need arises to create measures that guarantee the quality of life before this process of aging and dying. Thus, sometimes the need arises to include a caregiver in the routine of this elderly, or even the application of palliative care.

Palliative care is an approach aimed at improving the quality of life of patients and their families facing a life-threatening illness, through prevention and relief of suffering, and can be implemented through the early identification and quality of pain as well as their respective treatment and resolution of other problems related to biopsychosocial and spiritual aspects [8]. Death has always been associated with aging and the elderly, and over time, the narrative about this process has gone through several stages, resulting from culture, knowledge and individual and collective aspects. In this sense, the understanding of the finitude process is complex and is directly associated with biological, psychological and social changes [9]. The understanding of temporality, including finitude and death of the human being, is little discussed among people, due to the feelings associated with loss and the perception of their own finitude [1,10].

Reflecting on these processes sometimes seems painful, but it is more than primordial for the human being, having the necessity of positioning itself, its existence, family and health-disease process. This reflection allows us to deepen this process and intervene effectively and resolutely. Ensuring dignity at all stages of both processes. Aging concretizes the process of finitude in a solid, cold and fast way, which is clearly confronted with this idea [11]. The pain produced by death can not be overlooked, much less neglected, trying to give a more pleasant appearance to this process. However, it must be built parallel to the process of mourning, which is part of the essence of the human being, and should not be seen as something excluded from the human being and society. Therefore, understanding and discussing about finitude and death is essential to demystify the taboos and myths that guide them, in order to build a society composed of people who understand death as a natural process of life.

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