

Practical Issues in Geriatrics
Series Editor: Stefania Maggi

Nicola Veronese
Anna Marseglia
Editors

Psychogeriatrics

A Clinical Guide

 Springer

Practical Issues in Geriatrics

Series Editor

Stefania Maggi, Aging Branch, CNR-Neuroscience Institute, Padua, Italy

This practically oriented series presents state of the art knowledge on the principal diseases encountered in older persons and addresses all aspects of management, including current multidisciplinary diagnostic and therapeutic approaches. It is intended as an educational tool that will enhance the everyday clinical practice of both young geriatricians and residents and also assist other specialists who deal with aged patients. Each volume is designed to provide comprehensive information on the topic that it covers, and whenever appropriate the text is complemented by additional material of high educational and practical value, including informative video-clips, standardized diagnostic flow charts and descriptive clinical cases. Practical Issues in Geriatrics will be of value to the scientific and professional community worldwide, improving understanding of the many clinical and social issues in Geriatrics and assisting in the delivery of optimal clinical care.

****Indexed in Scopus****

Nicola Veronese • Anna Marseglia
Editors

Psychogeriatrics

A Clinical Guide

 Springer

Editors

Nicola Veronese
Department of Geriatrics and Internal
Medicine
University of Palermo
Palermo, Italy

Anna Marseglia
Department of Neurobiology
Care Sciences and Society
Division of Clinical Geriatrics
Karolinska Institute
Stockholm, Sweden

ISSN 2509-6060

Practical Issues in Geriatrics

ISBN 978-3-031-58487-9

<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-58488-6>

ISSN 2509-6079 (electronic)

ISBN 978-3-031-58488-6 (eBook)

© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s), under exclusive license to Springer Nature Switzerland AG 2024

This work is subject to copyright. All rights are solely and exclusively licensed by the Publisher, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction on microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology now known or hereafter developed.

The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use.

The publisher, the authors and the editors are safe to assume that the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication. Neither the publisher nor the authors or the editors give a warranty, expressed or implied, with respect to the material contained herein or for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The publisher remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

This Springer imprint is published by the registered company Springer Nature Switzerland AG
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

If disposing of this product, please recycle the paper.

Preface

Welcome to the fascinating world of psychogeriatrics, a discipline devoted to understanding the complexity of mental health in aging. This book serves as a comprehensive guide to the multifaceted aspects of psychogeriatrics, providing insights into the psychological, biological, social, and ethical dimensions of mental health in older adults.

In recent years, the field of psychogeriatrics has gained increasing recognition and importance owing to the growing population of older adults globally. With advancements in healthcare and longer life expectancy, the number of older individuals confronting mental health challenges also is on the rise. Consequently, there is a pressing need for healthcare professionals, caregivers, researchers, and policymakers to deepen their understanding of psychogeriatric conditions, developing and implementing effective strategies for prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and care.

This book aims, to offer a comprehensive approach to psychogeriatrics, delving into a number of topics pertinent to mental health and aging. From dementia to prevalent psychiatric disorders in older adults, each chapter presents valuable insights and evidence-based recommendations. Furthermore, the book tackles key psychosocial and ethical aspects of caring for older individuals with mental health issues, such as the influence of social determinants of health, socio-cultural factors, and end-of-life care.

The contributors to this book are experts in the field of psychogeriatrics, comprising geriatricians, geriatric psychiatrists, neurologists, psychologists with background in aging and geriatrics, geriatric epidemiologists, and other healthcare professionals. Their diverse perspectives and wealth of experience enrich the content of this book, providing readers with a comprehensive and up-to-date resource for understanding and addressing the mental health needs of older adults.

Throughout the book, emphasis is placed on the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration and person-centered care in psychogeriatrics. Recognizing the unique needs and preferences of older individuals, as well as the complex interplay of psychological, social, and environmental factors, is essential for providing effective and compassionate care.

Beyond healthcare professionals, this book caters to caregivers, family members, undergraduate and graduate trainees, researchers, and anyone interested in learning more about psychogeriatrics. By raising awareness and knowledge of mental health

issues in older adults, we can work together to promote healthy aging, enhance quality of life, and ensure dignity and respect for older individuals facing mental health challenges.

As editors, we are privileged to present this book as a valuable resource for advancing the field of psychogeriatrics and enhancing the care and support available to older adults with mental health needs. We hope that readers will find this book informative, thought-provoking, and ultimately empowering in their efforts to promote mental well-being and healthy aging in our aging population.

Sincerely

Palermo, Italy
Stockholm, Sweden

Nicola Veronese
Anna Marseglia

Contents

1	Anxiety and Depressive Disorders in Older Adults	1
	Theodore D. Cosco, Megha Goel, Indira Riadi, Eliza R. Farquharson, Cari Randa, John Pickering, Jessica Miskiewicz, and John R. Best	
2	Bipolar Disorder in Older People	17
	Laura Montejo and Andrea Murru	
3	Alcohol Abuse and Addiction in Older People	31
	Dorota Religa, Theofanis Tsevis, and Lars-Olof Wahlund	
4	Treatment of Challenging Behavior in Dementia	57
	Ruslan Leontjevas, Marion Klaver, Martin Smalbrugge, and Debby L. Gerritsen	
5	General Considerations on Psychopharmacology in Older People	81
	Jorge Juri, Alejandro Serra, and Dante Boveris	
6	Loneliness and Psychiatric Disorders in Older Adults	91
	Federico Triolo, Linnea Sjöberg, Amaia Calderón-Larrañaga, and Lena Dahlberg	



Anxiety and Depressive Disorders in Older Adults

1

Theodore D. Cosco, Megha Goel, Indira Riadi,
Eliza R. Farquharson, Cari Randa, John Pickering,
Jessica Miskiewicz, and John R. Best

1.1 Introduction

In this chapter, we seek to understand the complexities of depression and anxiety among older adults, a segment of the population frequently marginalized in mental health discourse. By recognizing that these mental health challenges are not uniform across life stages, this chapter specifically focuses on how they manifest, impact, and are addressed in older adulthood. We begin by dissecting the symptomatic profiles of depression and anxiety in this demographic, acknowledging the possibility that these conditions might represent either a continuation of lifelong mental health struggles or emerge as new challenges in later life. This distinction is crucial for developing appropriate therapeutic interventions and support systems.

The chapter further delves into the lived experiences of older adults living with depression and anxiety, highlighting how these conditions are intricately intertwined with the aging process. We explore the unique repercussions these mental health issues have on the quality of life, daily functioning, and overall well-being of older individuals. Special attention is given to the role of comorbidities, often prevalent in this age-group, which can complicate diagnosis and treatment. The interplay of physical health issues, such as cognitive decline and chronic illnesses, with

T. D. Cosco (✉)

School of Public Policy, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, BC, Canada

Department of Gerontology, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, BC, Canada

Oxford Institute of Population Ageing, University of Oxford, Oxford, UK

e-mail: theodore_cosco@sfu.ca

M. Goel · I. Riadi · C. Randa · J. Pickering · J. Miskiewicz · J. R. Best

Department of Gerontology, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, BC, Canada

E. R. Farquharson

Division of Psychology and Language Sciences, University College London, London, UK

mental health conditions, presents a layered challenge for healthcare providers and caregivers.

Moreover, we examine the psychological aspects, considering how life transitions, grief, and changes in social roles can contribute to or exacerbate mental health issues in older adults. The chapter also addresses the critical role of social factors, including isolation, socioeconomic status, and the evolving dynamics of family support in the mental health of the elderly. These factors are not only pivotal in understanding the prevalence and expression of depression and anxiety but also in shaping the approaches to treatment and care.

In discussing interventions, the chapter provides a balanced view of both pharmacological and non-pharmacological strategies. It emphasizes the importance of tailored treatment plans that consider the unique physiological responses of older adults to medication, alongside the potential benefits of psychotherapy, digital interventions, and community support systems. The goal is to present a holistic view of managing depression and anxiety in older adults, one that goes beyond mere symptom management to enhance overall life satisfaction and well-being.

By the end of this chapter, readers will gain a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted nature of depression and anxiety in older adults. The insights offered aim to foster greater empathy, inform more effective treatment approaches, and ultimately improve the quality of life for older individuals grappling with these challenging mental health conditions.

1.2 Depression and Anxiety in the Context of Older Adults

Depression and anxiety are the most common mental health issues older adults may face in their lifetime. These two mental health problems may be lifelong, or with onset in older adulthood, with consequent repercussions pertaining to lived experiences and quality of life [1, 2]. Due to the interconnected nature of comorbid depression and anxiety, it can be difficult to separate onset of one disorder from the other; however, almost all anxiety disorders appear to show comorbidity with depressive symptoms of varying severity [1, 3]. The goals of the following section are twofold: (1) to introduce the symptomatic profiles of depression and anxiety in the context of older adults and (2) to explore the complexities of the lived experiences of older adults with depression and anxiety and the resulting multiple jeopardies when biological, psychological, and social factors interact.

1.2.1 Depression and Aging

Depression is not a normal part of the aging process; however, older adults are at an increased risk of developing depression over time. Although depression symptoms present similarly in older adults as with younger cohorts, older adults have the added burden of comorbid medical conditions including cognitive impairment and often receive ineffective treatment or symptoms even remain undetected [4].

Depressive symptoms accompany and interact with a wide array of experiences and comorbidities more common for older adults, so the indicators are easy to overlook and remain untreated, perpetuating negative perceptions of health and perceived futility of accessing health care services [5]. The bidirectional nature of depression and comorbid health conditions can occlude developing a holistic treatment plan. Major Depressive Disorder (MDD) and Persistent Depressive Disorder (PDD) are the two most common depressive disorders affecting older adults [6]. For more than half of people living with depression, onset of depressive symptoms is reported in older adulthood [7]. Although older adults appear to have lower prevalence of depression than younger cohorts, this can be explained with the survivorship bias, wherein those who are more severely affected die earlier. Even below diagnosable thresholds for Major Depressive Disorder (MDD), 10% to 15% of older adults experience clinically significant depressive symptoms [4, 8]. In community-dwelling older adults aged 65 and over, MDD ranges in prevalence 1–5% internationally, with most countries trending toward the lower range [7, 9].

1.2.2 Anxiety and Aging

The body of research is less robust exploring the symptoms, expression, and external factors characterizing anxiety disorders in older adults. As an explanation to the vast underreporting of anxiety disorders in older adults, these older adults may have withdrawn socially or are unable to cope with the multiple jeopardies of illnesses affecting all facets of their health and participation, especially to seek out and complete research opportunities. Anxiety disorders pertaining to older adults include specific phobias, social anxiety disorder, generalized anxiety disorder (GAD), panic disorder, and agoraphobia [6]. Prevalence of anxiety disorders in older adults is estimated to range from 3.2% to 14.2% [3, 6, 10]. Older adults living with anxiety later in life must overcome the detrimental effects of increased loneliness and isolation, decreased physical activity and associated health outcomes, and low satisfaction with perceived quality of life [11, 12]. Cognitive symptoms of anxiety like worry can exacerbate medical conditions and tax already frail physical defences.

1.3 Multiple Jeopardies

Aging is a multifaceted and complex human experience influenced by biological, psychological, and social factors, further complicated by mental health issues across the lifespan. It is important to note that adults living with chronic mental health issues, also referred to as serious persistent mental illness (SPMI), will have faced social exclusion, housing insecurity, and limited income potentially contributing to a lower subjective appraisal of the value of their life. Multimorbidities and similarities in expression of symptom present a difficult task for geriatric healthcare providers in making a differential diagnosis for appropriate treatment.