

# Handbook of **THE PSYCHOLOGY OF AGING**

Editors:

James E. Birren  
K. Warner Schaie

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With the assistance of Associate Editors

Jack Botwinick  
Sheila Chown  
Carl Eisdorfer



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# FOREWORD

This volume is one of three handbooks of aging: the *Handbook of the Biology of Aging*; the *Handbook of the Psychology of Aging*; and the *Handbook of Aging and the Social Sciences*. Because of the increase in literature about the many facets of aging, there has been an increasing need to collate and interpret existing information and to make it readily available in systematic form, providing groundwork for the more efficient pursuit of research. The phenomena and issues of aging cut across many scientific disciplines and professions, and a review of research necessarily involves many experts. A decision was made, therefore, to develop a multidisciplinary project, the purpose of which was to organize, evaluate, and interpret research data, concepts, theories, and issues on the biological, psychological, and social aspects of aging.

It is expected that investigators will use these books as the basic systematic reference works on aging, resulting in the stimulation and planning of needed research. Professional personnel, policy-makers, practitioners, and others interested in research, education, and services to the aged will undoubtedly find the volumes useful. The new handbooks will also provide a compendium of information for students entering and pursuing the field of gerontology and will, we hope, also stimulate the organization of new courses of instruction on aging.

The Editorial Committees generated the final outline of each volume, suggested contributors, and discussed sources of information and other matters pertinent to the development of the work. Committee recommendations were re-

viewed by the Advisory Board and the Editor-in-Chief.

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There are many individuals who contributed to the successful completion of this publication project: Phoebe S. Liebig, Project Coordinator; Julie L. Moore, Research Bibliographer; Project Assistants Barbara H. Johnson, Aelred R. Rosser, Rochelle Smalewitz, and Robert D. Nall; Editorial Assistant V. Jayne Renner; Copy Editors Robert D. Nall and Judy Aklonis (social sciences), James Gollub (psychology), and Peggy Wilson and Carolyn Croissant (biology); Julie L. Moore, Indexing; and Library Assistance, Emily H. Miller and Jean E. Mueller. It is impossible to give the details of their many and varied contributions to the total effort,

but they reflect the best traditions of respect for scholarship.

The preparation of the handbooks has been a nonprofit venture; no royalties are paid to any individual or institution. The intent was to give the books a wide circulation on an international level and to reduce publication costs.

The project was supported by a grant from the Administration on Aging under the title "Integration of Information on Aging: Handbook Project," Grant Number 93-P-75181/9, to the University of Southern California, with James E. Birren as the principal investigator. The Editor and his associates wish to thank Dr. Marvin Taves, who encouraged the development of the project as a staff member of the Administration on Aging, and also the agency itself, which perceived the value of such work and provided the grant for its support.

JAMES E. BIRREN

# PREFACE

The purpose of preparing this *Handbook of the Psychology of Aging* is to provide an authoritative review and reference source of the scientific and professional literature on the psychological and behavioral aspects of aging. While most of the volume is devoted to the behavioral aspects of human aging, there is material on infrahuman species as well. The development of this reference work was thought to be essential in bringing together a widely scattered research literature. Since the publication of the first handbook on the behavioral aspects of aging in 1959 (*Handbook of Aging and the Individual*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press), the growth of the published literature has been dramatic.

Primarily, the book is intended for use by graduate students, researchers and professionals who require a definitive reference work. The present *Handbook* shows a broad concern for all behavioral processes from primary sensory phenomena to personality and behavior deviation. In the various chapters, the authors attempt to explain change in behavior and capacities which occur with advancing age and also generational differences or the differences between age groups. Such age-related phenomena are examined in terms of both biological and social determinants.

While the Editors and the Advisory Committee sought to develop a definitive and comprehensive work, the individual chapters could not include all the references on any particular topic. This is becoming increasingly difficult as the volume of literature is growing. Rather than attempt an exhaustive citation, the choice was to present systematic treatments in terms of basic principles, theories, and issues. While no

great attention was given to practical problems of individuals, the book clearly provides the scientific basis which gives justification and directions for many practical services to older adults.

The Editorial Committee for this volume consisted of Drs. James E. Birren, Jack Botwinick, Sheila M. Chown, Carl Eisdorfer and K. Warner Schaie. This committee met to discuss possible outlines of the book and to discuss potential contributors. Their dedication to the task of identifying the right topic and the right persons to do the chapters was admirable. It was a pleasure to be associated with colleagues who were so well informed, cooperative, and so generous with their time. About five years elapsed from the time the original project was discussed to the time of publication, with the earlier years mostly involved in planning the total project.

The scope of this book is but one expression of the dramatic increase of interest in the subject matter of human aging. In few other areas do psychologists have as much to contribute in terms of research which has implications for the well-being of millions of people and for the health of our society. It is expected that the publication of this volume will facilitate the organization of research and courses in the psychology of aging and research seminars.

It has been a pleasure to have the support of the Administration on Aging of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare and to have the opportunity of working with scientific and professional colleagues and a dedicated staff in producing this book.

JAMES E. BIRREN  
K. WARNER SCHAIE



# CONTENTS

## PART ONE

### Background 1

### 1: Research on the Psychology of Aging: Principles and Experimentation 3

*James E. Birren*

*V. Jayne Renner*

Definitions of Aging 3

Types of Age 4

Concept and Theory 5

The Nature of Time 5

Time Dependent Processes 7

Evolution of Aging 8

Methodology 10

Familial Longevity Factor 13

Functional Age 15

Experimental Gerontology 17

Psychology of Aging and Action Research 20

Intervention 21

Mechanism and Population Representation 24

Experimental Psychology of Aging 26

Social Conformity 27

Speed of Response 28

Perceptual Masking 30

Reaction Time and Practice 30

Research Evaluation 31

Epilogue 34

### 2: Quasi-Experimental Research Designs in the Psychology of Aging 39

*K. Warner Schaie*

Introduction 39

Assumptions About Aging and Change Over Time 40

Designs for the Study of Adult Development 44

Sampling and Generalizability 51

Suitability of Test Instruments 56

<b>3: Issues in Studying Developmental Change in Adults from a Multivariate Perspective</b>	<i>John R. Nesselroade</i>	59
Why a Multivariate Orientation to the Study of Behavioral Change in Adulthood		59
Applications of Conventional Multivariate Procedures		62
Extension of Conventional Multivariate Procedures to the Study of Change		63
Multivariate Procedures and Models Designed for Developmental Analysis		65
<b>4: History of Psychological Gerontology</b>	<i>Klaus F. Riegel</i>	70
Paradigmatic Orientations		70
Anglo-American Orientation		72
Continental European Orientation		80
Dialectical Orientation		82
Appendix		88
<b>5: Biological Theories of Aging</b>	<i>Nathan W. Shock</i>	103
The Role of Theories		103
Historical Perspective		103
Biological and Physiological Theories		103
Genetic Theories		104
Nongenetic Cellular Theories		106
Physiological Theories of Aging		109
Aging and Physiological Controls		111
Summary		112
<b>6: Toward a Sociological Theory of Change in Adulthood and Old Age</b>	<i>Marjorie Fiske Lowenthal</i>	116
Background		116
Constructs from Developmental Studies		117
Fluid Constructs		118
Individual Commitment in Social Context		119
<b>7: Toward Psychological Theories of Aging and Development</b>	<i>Paul B. Baltes</i> <i>Sherry L. Willis</i>	128
Introduction		128
Nature of Scientific Theory		129
Nature of Psychology		131
Psychological Theories of Aging and Development		134
Summary		147

## PART TWO

<b>Biological Basis of Aging and Behavior</b>	155
<b>8: The Neural Basis of Aging</b>	<i>William Bondareff</i>
Age Changes in Neuroglia	157
Intraneuronal Accumulation of Lipofuscin	158

Atrophic Changes and Neuronal Death	162
Age-Associated Changes in Neuronal Organelles and Cytochemistry	164
Synaptology of Senescent Brain	167
Age Changes of the Neuronal Microenvironment	168
<b>9: Aging of the Autonomic Nervous System</b> <i>Vladimir V. Frolkis</i>	177
Main Principles of Organization in the Autonomic Nervous System and Trends in its Age Changes	177
Vegetative Reflexes With Aging	178
The Hypothalamic Function in Aging	180
Efferent and Afferent Influences of the ANS in Aging	181
Transmitter Metabolism of the ANS With Aging	184
Vegetative Ganglia in Old Age	184
Visceroreception: Feedback in the ANS	186
Pharmacotherapy of the ANS in Old Age	186
<b>10: Behavior Genetics</b> <i>Gilbert S. Omenn</i>	190
Introduction and Aims of Behavior Genetics	190
Methodology of Behavior Genetics	191
Behavior Genetics of Aging: Studies of Animals	203
Behavior Genetics of Aging: Studies in Man	206
<b>11: Psychophysiology of Aging</b> <i>Gail R. Marsh</i> <i>Larry W. Thompson</i>	219
Electrocortical Measures	219
Evoked Potential Measures	229
Autonomic Nervous System Correlates	237
Conclusions and Comments	241
<b>PART THREE</b>	
<b>Environmental and Health Influences on Aging and Behavior</b>	249
<b>12: Stress, Disease, Aging and Behavior</b> <i>Carl Eisdorfer</i> <i>Frances Wilkie</i>	251
Introduction	251
Stress Research	252
Stress and Disease	257
Stress, Disease, and Behavior	267
Conclusion	270
<b>13: The Impact of the Environment on Aging and Behavior</b> <i>M. Powell Lawton</i>	276
Defining the Environment	276
The Interface of Individual and Environment	277
The Resource Environment	277
Urban and Rural Environments	282
Population Mixes—The Suprapersonal Environment	284

Planned Housing	286
Involuntary Relocation, Morbidity, and Mortality	290
Institutions	292
Theories of Man-Environment Relations	295
<b>14: The Cross-Cultural Perspective: Notes Toward a Comparative Psychology of Aging</b> <i>David Gutmann</i>	302
Introduction: Methods, Shortcomings, and Possibilities of Cross-Cultural Studies	302
The Age-Grading of Male Passivity	304
The Informal Age-Grading of Male Passivity	305
Towards a Species Psychology of Masculine Aging	307
Towards a Comparative Psychology of Longevity	308
The Age Grading of Female Dominance	309
The Older Woman as Witch	311
Age-Sex Roles and the Parental Imperative	312
Preliterate Gerontocracy: The Old Man as Hero	312
Trust and Survival in Later Life	314
The Intergration of Nature and Social Nurture in Later Life	316
Shortcomings of Disengagement Theory	317
Modernization and Disengagement	317
Rural and Urban Aging	319
The Matriarchy of the Cities	320
Passive Mastery in Urban Males	321
Aging and the Mind of the City	321
<b>15: The Impact of Social Structure on Aging Individuals</b> <i>Vern L. Bengtson</i> <i>Patricia L. Kasschau</i> <i>Pauline K. Ragan</i>	327
Social Definitions of Time and Aging	328
Social Differentiation and Aging: Group Variations in Patterns of Aging	331
Social Change and Aging	343
Implications for Research and Theory	347
<b>PART FOUR</b>	
<b>Behavioral Processes</b>	355
<b>16: Motivation and Activity</b> <i>Merrill F. Elias</i> <i>Penelope Kelly Elias</i>	357
Introduction	357
Definitions	357
Emphasis and Organization	358
Animal Research: Motivation and Activity	358
General Activity Level	361
Aversive Stimulation	368
Sexual Drive and Activity	371
Human Motivation Studies	372
Anxiety-Arousal	372

Classical Drive Studies	375
Activity: Sex Drive	376
Activity, Work, and Leisure	378
Conclusions	378
<b>17: Age Differences in Human Memory</b> <i>Fergus I. M. Craik</i>	384
Introduction	384
Models of Memory	385
Short-Term Retention	387
Age Differences in Secondary Memory Performance	400
Broader Implications	414
<b>18: Learning and Aging</b> <i>David Arenberg</i> <i>Elizabeth A. Robertson-Tchabo</i>	421
Longitudinal Studies	421
Theoretical Developments and Trends	425
Age Differences in Verbal Processes	426
Transfer and Interference	430
Animal Learning	432
Conclusions	445
<b>19: Motor Performance</b> <i>A. T. Welford</i>	450
Introduction	450
Limitations Due to Peripheral Mechanisms	451
Limitations Due to Central Mechanisms	453
Relationship of Sensorimotor Performance to Other Variables	485
Industrial Studies Relating to Sensorimotor Performance	486
Summary Conclusions	490
<b>30: Visual Perception and Communication</b> <i>James L. Fozard</i> <i>Ernst Wolf</i> <i>Benjamin Bell</i> <i>Ross A. McFarland</i> <i>Stephen Podolsky</i>	497
Structural Changes and Their Behavioral Significance	499
Sensitivity and Adaptation of the Eye to Light	507
Basic Visual Functions	512
Visual Information Processing	517
Context Effects in Perceptual Judgments and Information Processing	521
Practical Applications	528
Conclusions	528
<b>21: Auditory Perception and Communication</b> <i>John F. Corso</i>	535
Introduction	535
Clinical Features of the Aging Auditory System	537
Auditory Psychophysics in Older Adults	540
Language and Speech Communication	544
The Psychology of Deafness and Communication Disorders in Older Adults	548
Conclusions	550

<b>22: Taste and Smell</b>	<i>Trygg Engen</i>	554
Detection and Discrimination		554
Preference		557
Possible Explanations for Age Effects in Taste and Smell		558
Conclusions		559
<b>23: Age Changes in Touch, Vibration, Temperature, Kinesthesia, and Pain Sensitivity</b>	<i>Dan R. Kenshalo</i>	562
Introduction		562
Cutaneous Sensitivity		563
Kinesthesia		572
Complex Sensitivities		574
Summary, Conclusion, and Comments		575
<b>24: Intellectual Abilities</b>	<i>Jack Botwinick</i>	580
Does Intelligence Decline in Old Age		580
Cross-Sectional Investigations		583
Longitudinal Studies		589
Later Life Changes		593
Ability Levels		599
Survival		602
Summary Highlights		603
<b>25: Changes in Problem Solving Ability in Old Age</b>	<i>Patrick Rabbitt</i>	606
Piagetian Theories Applied to Changes in Problem Solving Ability in Old Age		607
Work on "Concept Formation" Tasks		607
Use of Training Procedures as a Methodological Tool		608
Experiments Examining Transfer in Concept Formation and in Some Verbal Learning Tasks		609
Experiments on the Deduction of Principles Underlying Switching Circuits		613
Probability Matching, Calculations of Odds, and Willingness to Respond		615
Possible Effects of Changes in Rate of Information Processing With Age Upon Problem-Solving Ability		618
Changes in Capacity for Perceptual Organization in Old Age		619
Decline in Intellectual Capacity with Age in Everyday Life		622
<b>26: Personality and Aging</b>	<i>Bernice L. Neugarten</i>	626
Introduction		626
Adult Personality: A Developmental Perspective		629
Theories of Adult Change		631
Time and the Life Span		633
Studies of Age-Related Change in Personality		635
Longitudinal and Follow-Up Studies		640
Recent Theoretical Formulations		642
Conclusion		644
<b>27: Psychopathology and Social Pathology</b>	<i>Eric Pfeiffer</i>	650
Introduction		650
Functional Psychiatric Disorders		653

Organic Brain Syndromes	660
Social Pathology	665
<b>28: Morale, Careers and Personal Potentials</b> <i>Sheila M. Chown</i>	672
Introduction	672
Morale	672
Assessment of Personal Potentials	674
Careers	677
Reactions to Frustration	681
Future Research	685
<b>29: Clinical Assessment and Aging</b> <i>K. Warner Schaie</i> <i>Joyce P. Schaie</i>	692
Introduction	692
Techniques of Assessment	696
Relating Assessment Data to the Life Prospects of the Aged Client	713
Some Concluding Thoughts on the Status of Clinical Psychological Assessment	716
<b>30: Intervention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation of Psychiatric Disorders</b> <i>Carl Eisdorfer</i> <i>Bernard A. Stotsky</i>	724
Introduction	724
Issues in Treatment	725
Physical Interventions	725
Psychological Therapies	732
Social, Institutional, Environmental	735
Conclusion	740
<b>Author Index</b>	751
<b>Subject Index</b>	774

# PART 1 BACKGROUND



