

Ashtavakra Institute of Rehabilitation Sciences & Research Formerly Special Art School

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Topic- Learning Disability

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ABSTRACT

Objective: To identify some key biological, psychological and social issues relevant to how ageing might particularly effect people with learning disabilities. learning disability brings changes in the rates of physical and mental health problems similar to those found in people without pre-existing developmental disabilities. learning disability, it is important to appreciate that this term refers to a highly heterogeneous group of people. These people all have evidence of delayed or abnormal early development together with significant intellectual and functional impairments, but they may differ markedly in terms of the cause, developmental profile, nature and extent of the impairments — and like all of us, in their personalities and social backgrounds. While a history of delayed or abnormal childhood development is essential if the label of 'learning disability' is to be applied, this process of 'development' should be considered to be lifelong and therefore continuing into later life.

Methods: This selected review considers the extent to which there are similarities and differences relative to people without learning disabilities. The life of a person with learning disabilities and the funding of social care lead to a failure to recognise and plan for retirement and to provide the necessary change in lifestyle when required. learning disabilities can be associated with considerable behavioural and emotional changes that can go unrecognised, resulting in the person failing to receive appropriate support. The changing age structure of the population identified in childhood as having a learning disability imposes important challenges. These include ensuring that the development of additional age-related disabilities can be prevented and maintaining general well-being and quality of life. This issue has arisen now because of significant changes in the care of people with learning disabilities and their improved life expectancy. 'Ageing' should be considered within the context of demographic changes in the population as a whole, as some of these health and social issues will be directly relevant to the older population of people with learning disabilities. From a research perspective, the question of whether the biological process of ageing and its social and emotional consequences differ for those with a learning disability needs investigation.

Results: There is a convergence, in later life, between people with a learning disability and those without, owing to the reduced life expectancy of people with more severe disabilities. People with Down's syndrome have particular risks of age-related problems relatively early in life. In a study of 101 people with learning disabilities aged 50 and over that found 12 people with dementia, the presence of dementia was found to be associated with additional physical health problems and a greater proneness to violence and behavioural problems (Reference Moss and Patel Moss & Patel, 1997). The authors pointed out that it is not simply the cognitive decline that is leading to functional decline, but a combination of factors. Interventions need to be targeted not only on issues relating to the dementia but also on those relating to physical health and environment. Dementia is particularly relevant in people with Down's syndrome

Conclusion: The improved life expectancy of people with learning disabilities is well established. There is a lack of a concerted response to ensure that the best possible health and social care is provided for people with learning disabilities in later life.

Keywords: Diagnostic overshadowing, Down syndrome, cognitive and functional ability

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