**[Module 1: Ageing (Weeks 1-4)](https://online.cdu.edu.au/webapps/blackboard/content/listContent.jsp?course_id=_47988_1&content_id=_3158118_1)**

**Learning objectives**. The student will be able to:

* Demonstrate understanding of the contemporary theoretical frameworks of ageing.
* Describe physical changes accompanying the normal ageing process.
* Identify services across continuum of care that can be utilised to promote healthy, positive ageing.
* Describe the evolving role of the nurse to support healthy ageing.

**Assessment 1 will be opened 08:00 Monday 10/08/2020 to 17:00 Friday 14/08/2020 Perth time (Week 4).**

### [Week 1](https://online.cdu.edu.au/webapps/blackboard/execute/displayLearningUnit?course_id=_47988_1&content_id=_3158144_1)

This week we will be focusing on exploring the concept of age and Australia's older population. In this module we will be examining diverse populations of older Australians.

# Introduction

Populations around the world are ageing. In Australia 1 in 17 people were aged over 65 years in 2017, with the number and proportion of older Australians expected to grow. The ageing population does pose some challenges for the healthcare system, but also provides opportunities to embrace and enhance the many contributions older people make to society.

In this first module we are going to examine the concept of age, explore the diverse older population and reflect on our own thoughts of ageing and discuss age related stereotypes and barriers which can impact on the older person.

# What is age?

 Life stages such as old age (late adulthood) are socially constructed. What this means is there is not one universal definition for old age. In Australia old age is commonly identified as beginning at aged 65 and over. This definition of old age  is linked to the retirement age/ pension systems, which was introduced in the first half of the twentieth century (Brown, 2010). Lemone et al. (2017) describe the older person as: young-old (age 65 to 74); middle-old (age 75 to 84); and old-old (age 85 and over); this reflects the biological changes associated with ageing.

Older persons are complex beings with bio-psycho-social, cultural and spiritual aspects that contribute to their individuality (Bernoth, 2017, p. 244). Although there are changes due to the aging process, aging is an individual experience. Ageing is a normal part of the human condition, reflecting genetics, lifestyle and social and environmental factors. Understanding changes characteristics of the aging process is essential to nursing practice. Ageing is a variable process. Ageing is not synonymous with disease or illness. Certain aspects of the aging process make individuals more vulnerable to disease and illness, but no pathology is inevitable with age (Bernoth, 2017).

Physical changes historically attributed to ageing are now recognised now as more likely to be caused by lifestyle variables e.g. aches and pains traditionally attributed to aging are now recognised as more likely to due to a sedentary lifestyle or disuse of abilities. Some factors associated with aging are non-modifiable such as genetics, gender and age but other factors can be modified by lifestyle choices such as smoking, nutrition, alcohol, physical activity, stress management/ coping mechanisms. Because a substantial part of the ageing process depends on lifestyle, individuals can make significant choices to increase the probability of healthy, positive ageing (Bernoth, 2017).

# Older Australians

In Australia the term older adult or older Australian is used to describe individuals over the age of 65. The Australian Institute of health and Welfare describe Older Indigenous Australians as individuals aged over 50 years. The difference in age used to describe older Australian is to reflect the life expectancy gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations in Australia.

In Australia 3.8 million people are aged 65 years and over, approximately 15% of the total population.

**Number and proportion of age distribution (older Australians)**

**2017**

65-74 years of age 2.2 million (57%)

75-84 years of age 1.2 million (30%)

> 85 years of age 497,000 (13%)

Like many developed countries Australia has a relatively high median age, with a significant proportion of the population 65 and over. The growth of Australia’s older population is partially attributed to our increasing life expectancy, with Australians enjoying some of the highest life expectancies in the world. The following graph highlights how Australia compares to other countries in terms of the proportion of people age 65 and over.

# Older Indigenous Australians

 Unfortunately, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people do not enjoy the same life expectancy as the non-Indigenous population. Moreover, Age related conditions often affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at younger ages.

In Australia approximately 3% (650,000) of the total population identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander but:

* Only 17% were older than 50 years
* Only 5% were older than 65
* Less than 1% were older the 85
* **Please read:**
* [**Chapter 3 'The experience of ageing for Indigenous Australians and Maori peoples'.**](https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.ezproxy.cdu.edu.au/lib/cdu/reader.action?docID=4941721&ppg=81)
* S., Micek, F.,  McMillan, & R, McMillan. (2017). The experience of ageing for Indigenous Australians and Maori peoples. In Bernoth & Winkler (Eds.), Healthy aging and aged care (1st ed., pp. 51-70). South Melbourne, VIC: Oxford University

**Review questions:**

* What is the life expectancy gap between indigenous and non indigenous Australians?
* What are the main contributors to the mortality gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians?
* What are some of the clinical practices that need to exist for older people in residential aged care and in acute care, for them to feel culturally safe?

# Diverse groups of older Australians

 Australia is a multicultural country and so is our older population. In 2016 37% of people aged 65 years and older were born overseas. 20% of people aged over 65 years of age were born in a non-English Speaking country. In 2016 a survey identified that 8 in 10 older adults reported speaking English well or very Well at home. 12% spoke another language as well as English and 5% reports speaking another language and English poorly. The most common languages spoken by Individuals aged over 65 other than English include:

**Italian (3%)**

**Greek (2%)**

#### ****Homeless older population****

Homelessness is an increasing problem for older Australians. In 2016 18,600 people were aged over 55 and homeless. In Australian the 55 years of age is used to describe older homeless people. The following graph highlights how the number and age of homeless people is Australia has increased over the last ten years.

**Older Australians who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex**

In the last 50 years we have seen an improvement in the rights of the LGBTI community, but discrimination and stigma still exist which can impact on the older adult’s access to services. Many of the older LGBTI community will have experienced discrimination and trauma including social isolation and family rejection. The historic approach to discriminating against the LGBTI community can make it difficulty for older Australians to disclose their sexual or gender identity when accessing services. The LGBTI community like all communities is diverse, and individual needs will vary. There is very little data regarding the older LGBTI community, and the following graph highlights the proportion of same-sex couples by age in 2016.

**Please read:**

* AIHW (2018). Older Australia at a glance:  <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports-data/population-groups/older-people/overview>
* [**Chapter 1 'The profile of older people in Australia and NZ**](https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.ezproxy.cdu.edu.au/lib/cdu/reader.action?docID=4941721&ppg=35)

Anderson-Wurf (2017). The profile of older people in Australia and New Zealand. In Bernoth & Winkler (Ed.), *Healthy aging and aged care*(1st ed., pp. 3-25). South Melbourne, VIC: Oxford University Press.

**Reflection:**

Considering the following information reflect on some of the barriers diverse groups of older Australians may face when trying to access healthcare and what can we do as health professionals to improve access.

### [Week 2](https://online.cdu.edu.au/webapps/blackboard/execute/displayLearningUnit?course_id=_47988_1&content_id=_3158145_1)

This week will focus on the aging process including normal changes and ....

# Reading

**Reading - Please read Chapter 12 'Impact of physiological changes in older Australians'**

Bernoth (2017). The profile of older people in Australia and New Zealand. In Bernoth & Winkler (Ed.), *Healthy aging and aged care*(1st ed., pp. 243-263). South Melbourne, VIC: Oxford University Press.

**Review questions:**

* What are some of the common physiological changes that occur with ageing?
* What factors influence optimal health and development in older adults?
* What is the role of the registered nurse working with older adults?

### [Week 3](https://online.cdu.edu.au/webapps/blackboard/execute/displayLearningUnit?course_id=_47988_1&content_id=_3158146_1)

This weeks focus will be on aged care services in Australia

# Reading

**Multimorbidity** is 'the presence of multiple chronic conditions that collectively have an adverse effect on the health and well-being of the person living with them' (Bernoth & Winkler, 2017). This is of particular relevant when caring for older adults, where multimorbidity may be more complex due to the overlap of physical and mental health disorders, frailty and polypharmacy.

**Reading - Please read Chapter 19 'Managing multiple chronic conditions'**

Devitt (2017). The profile of older people in Australia and New Zealand. In Bernoth & Winkler (Ed.), *Healthy aging and aged care*(1st ed., pp. 402-426). South Melbourne, VIC: Oxford University Press.

**Review questions:**

* What are some of the challenges of caring for older people living with multiple chronic health conditions?
* How can care for older adults with multiple chronic conditions be improved?
* What is an integrated and coordinated model of care?

# Reading

 The prevalence of prescription medication use among older adults increases substantially with age. Providing safe, effective drug therapy for the elderly is challenging for many reasons:

* They use more medications than any other age group, increasing risk of adverse effects and medication interactions, and making adherence more difficult
* They are more likely to have chronic disorders that may be worsened by the medication or affect medication response
* Their physiologic reserves are generally reduced and can be further reduced by acute and chronic disorders
* Aging can alter pharmacodynamics and pharmacokinetics
* They may be less able to obtain or afford medications (Ruscin & Linnebur, 2018).

It is not just the prescribed medications one should be aware of.

**Reading** - **Chapter  16 'Pharmacology'**

Daniel, McMillan, & Bernoth (2017). The profile of older people in Australia and New Zealand. In Bernoth & Winkler (Ed.), *Healthy aging and aged care*(1st ed., pp.338-357). South Melbourne, VIC: Oxford University Press.

**Review questions:**

* What are some of the important things to know about polypharmacy?
* How does ageing affect pharmokinetics?
* Why is a medication review important with polypharmacy?

Activity

The following link will take you to the Australian Government Department of Human Services - Medicare.  <https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/medicare>

Navigate your way around the site to find the answers to the following questions that you could be asked as a registered nurse.

* What is Medicare?
* What is the pharmaceutical benefits scheme?
* Does one need to be on a Centrelink benefit to receive pharmaceutical benefits scheme?
* Are all medications included? If not, how could this impact?

The following link will take you to the Australian Government Department of Human Services - Age Pension <https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/age-pension>

Navigate your way around the site to find the answers to the following questions:

* Who is eligible for the Australian Age Pension? How is it determined?
* What other payments and services are available for older Australians? How is it determined?