General Aging in Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

Aging with an Intellectual and Developmental Disability

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Produced on behalf of DDS by the Center for Developmental Disabilities Evaluation and Research (CDDER)
Conditions Commonly Seen in Older Adults with IDD

- Sensory deficits – i.e.; decreased vision or hearing
- Dental disease
- Obesity
- Constipation
- GERD
- Osteoarthritis and other musculoskeletal sources of pain or debility
- Behavioral/mental health problems
- Osteoporosis and fractures
- Pain
- Polypharmacy (multiple medications)
Health Care Disparities

- Doctors and other health care providers have little or no formal education on caring for adults with IDD
- Limited access to primary and specialty care
- Lower rates of preventative care and recommended screenings
  - Mammograms
  - PAP smears
  - Colonoscopies, etc.
Challenge Unique to Adults with IDD:

- UNDERdiagnosis
  - Failing to recognize changes or
  - Attributing them to the patient’s intellectual disability

- OVERdiagnosis by either:
  - Over-calling the diagnosis without exploring all other possibilities
Additional Lifespan Considerations for This Current Aging Generation

- State institutionalization
- Early and prolonged exposure to psychoactive medications
- Lack of formal, expert diagnosis
- Poor medical record-keeping
- Lack of longitudinal historians
- Lack of ongoing family contact
- Fear of support services
Common Pitfalls...

- Inadequate “hand-off” to new caregivers
- Multiple prescribers who don’t communicate with one another
- Multiple medications and risk of interactions or side effects
- Making the wrong assumptions:
  - “Symptoms are due to the underlying disability”
  - “Changes are part of the normal aging process”
  - “He/she is just being behavioral”
  - “Doesn’t everyone with IDD eventually develop dementia?”
Additional Webinars on Aging with IDD

General Aging in Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
- Understanding Age Related Changes
- The Role of Polypharmacy
- Identifying and Assessing Pain
- Behavior Related Changes and Aging in Adults with IDD
- Health Promotion and Aging in Adults with IDD
- Mobility and Aging in Adults with IDD
- Aging with Down Syndrome
- Aging and Cerebral Palsy

Dementia and Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
- Introduction to Dementia and Aging with IDD
- Early Evaluation of Dementia and Alzheimer’s Disease
- Stages of Alzheimer’s Disease
- Applying the Knowledge to Dementia Caregiving and Caregiver Support
- Caregiving in Action: Case Studies and Practical Tips
Additional Aging with IDD Resources

Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services (DDS)

Center for Developmental Disabilities Evaluation & Research
http://shriver.umassmed.edu/cdder/aging_idd_education
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