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PERCEIVED CONTROL OF PHYSICAL AGEING

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ABSTRACT

The central purpose of the study was to look at perceived control of the physical ageing process. The extent to which the people believe that physical ageing is controllable was investigated. Use of strategies and technological aids was also explored, to gain a picture of what specific things people intend to do (or have already done) to help control the physical ageing process. The study also looked at the importance of various information and support sources, and at peoples faith in technological advances to solve problems of physical ageing. The sample consisted of university students and members of community groups. Participants were 174 adults aged between 18 and 86 years of age. Fifty eight percent of the study population was male. Participants completed a questionnaire developed by the researcher. They indicated that they believed that people in general have low levels of control over the majority of changes associated with physical ageing and that people should generally accept the changes. No relationship was found between age and perceived control. Participants indicated a willingness to use a wide range of aids and strategies to help control the physical ageing process. There was no relationship found between perceived control and intended aid or strategy use. Participants indicated that all the sources of social support and most of the sources of information listed in the questionnaire could be helpful. Several additional information sources were also suggested. A moderate level of confidence was expressed in technological advancement. The implications and limitations of the study are discussed. Possible future research directions are also discussed.

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