

Test Bank - Gerontological Nursing (10th by Eliopoulos)
Chapter 2

1. A gerontological nurse is preparing a plan of care for an older adult applying the error theory of aging as the foundation of the plan. Which concept would the nurse integrate into the plan?

- A. Perpetuation of DNA mutations results in organ and system malfunction.
- B. Age-related dysfunction of organs and body systems results in DNA mutations.
- C. The number of cell divisions is genetically predetermined.
- D. Errors in organ function contribute to changes in the cells' genetic code.

Answer: A

Rationale: The error theory of aging proposes that genetic mutations are perpetuated through the aging process, resulting in organ malfunction and eventual decline in body function. Organ malfunction results from, but does not cause, the genetic mutations in question. A genetic predetermination of the number of cell divisions is associated with the programmed theory of aging.

Question format: Multiple Choice

Chapter 2: Theories of Aging

Cognitive Level: Apply

Client Needs: Health Promotion and Maintenance

Reference: p. 15

2. A nurse is explaining to an older adult client that many of the changes in his body that are currently causing him frustration may have their origins in genetic changes. The nurse also explains that these genetic changes may have benefited him during his younger years. Which of the following theories of aging underlies the nurse's explanation?

- A. Disposable soma theory
- B. Free radical theory
- C. Mutation accumulation theory
- D. Antagonistic pleiotropy theory

Answer: D

Rationale: Antagonistic pleiotropy theory proposes that genetic mutations that are problematic in later life may be rooted in mutation that played a beneficial role earlier in life. The disposable soma theory proposes that aging is related to the use of the body's energy rather than to genetics. The free radical theory suggests that aging is due to oxidative metabolism and the effects of free radicals, highly unstable, reactive molecules containing an extra electrical charge that are generated from oxygen metabolism. The mutation accumulation theory suggests that aging occurs due to a declining force of natural selection with age.

Question format: Multiple Choice

Chapter 2: Theories of Aging

Cognitive Level: Understand

Client Needs: Physiological Integrity: Physiological Adaptation

Reference: p. 14-15

3. An 80-year-old female client explains to the nurse that she attributes her health status to her regular intake of berries, fruit juices, and green tea, which "helps cleanse the damaging molecules out of my body." The nurse interprets this statement as reflecting which theory of aging?

- A. Free radical theory
- B. Biogerontology
- C. Disposable soma theory
- D. Cross-linking theory

Answer: A

Rationale: The free radical theory of aging attributes damage to the accumulation of free radicals that may be countered by the intake of antioxidants. Biogerontology refers to the study of the connection between aging and disease processes. Bacteria, fungi, viruses, and other organisms are thought to be responsible for certain physiologic changes during the aging process. The disposable soma theory proposes that aging is related to the use of the body's energy rather than to genetics. The cross-linking theory proposes that cellular division is threatened because of radiation or a chemical reaction in which a cross-linking agent attaches itself to a DNA strand and prevents normal parting of the strands during mitosis. Over time, as these cross-linking agents accumulate, they form dense aggregates that impede intracellular transport; ultimately, the body's organs and systems fail.

Question format: Multiple Choice

Chapter 2: Theories of Aging

Cognitive Level: Understand

Client Needs: Health Promotion and Maintenance

Reference: p. 14

4. A nurse is educating an older adult client about the role of the immune response and autoimmune activity in the aging process. Which statement by the nurse leads to effective teaching?

- A. "Changes that we call 'mutations' in your cells make your organs more vulnerable to chronic illness and germs."
- B. "You may have more difficulty fighting off infections because of a weaker immune system, and it is possible your body will attack itself."
- C. "Diseases such as arthritis, which we term 'autoimmune,' make you more likely to catch viruses and other bugs."
- D. "Our bodies seem to have an 'expiration date,' after which all people are far more likely to get infections and develop chronic illness."

Answer: B

Rationale: Decreased immune response coupled with increased autoimmune activity is implicated in many of the effects of the aging process. The salience of mutations is associated with genetic theories of aging and autoimmune activity is not considered the direct cause of the decline in thymus and bone marrow activity. A predetermined cell life span is associated with the programmed theory of aging.

Question format: Multiple Choice

Chapter 2: Theories of Aging

Cognitive Level: Apply

Client Needs: Health Promotion and Maintenance

Integrated Process: Teaching/Learning

Reference: p. 16

5. A clinical nurse specialist is espousing the disengagement theory of aging when teaching staff how best to meet the needs of older clients. Which teaching points best captures the disengagement theory of aging?

- A. Older adults often benefit from a gradual and controlled withdrawal of their own interests from society's interests.
- B. The disengagement between an older adult's abilities and desires can lead to frustration and, ultimately, to illness.
- C. The lack of synchronicity between older adults' immune systems and their environments can be the root of many problems.
- D. It is imperative that we ensure older adults remain engaged with interests and events beyond themselves.

Answer: A

Rationale: Disengagement theory postulates that disengagement between the individual and society is beneficial to both parties. It does not propose that this process of withdrawal be prevented nor that it necessarily leads to frustration or illness. This theory does not focus on the immune system as a central theme.

Question format: Multiple Choice

Chapter 2: Theories of Aging

Cognitive Level: Apply

Client Needs: Health Promotion and Maintenance

Reference: p. 17

6. The nurse manager of a long-term care facility is developing programs for the residents, integrating the concepts of the activity theory of aging. When explaining these programs to the staff, which statement would be most appropriate?

- A. "We need to facilitate older adults' desire to step back from the responsibilities and roles they had in earlier years."
- B. "We need to get the residents to perform physical exercise at many intervals during the day."
- C. "We need to remember that the psychological roles and characteristics of the residents change profoundly in later years of life."
- D. "We have to treat the residents as middle aged adults and keep them engaged in meaningful acts."

Answer: D

Rationale: The activity theory asserts that an older person should continue a middle-aged lifestyle, denying the existence of old age for as long as possible, and that society should apply the same norms to old age as it does to middle age. The theory also indicates not to advocate for diminishing activity, interest, and involvement as its members grow old. Stepping back from roles is associated with disengagement theory, and psychological roles and character are not thought to change radically in later life. Physical exercise is not a central component of the activity theory.

Question format: Multiple Choice

Chapter 2: Theories of Aging

Cognitive Level: Apply

Client Needs: Psychosocial Integrity

Reference: p. 17-18

7. A nurse is assessing several older adult clients. Which client would the nurse identify as continuing to struggle with achieving Erikson's task of reconciling ego integrity with despair?

- A. An 80-year-old man is struggling to determine his identity apart from his lifelong career as a business leader.
- B. A 79-year-old woman has established habits that promote her financial independence despite a lack of savings.
- C. An 80-year-old man revels in his large, happy family rather than focusing on his mobility limitations resulting from Parkinson disease.
- D. A 77-year-old man is trying to determine whether his life has had deep significance and meaning.

Answer: D

Rationale: Deriving satisfaction from oneself rather than occupational roles, finding pleasure despite physical limitations, and determining meaning in the life one has lived are all aspects of Erikson's outcome of ego integrity or despair.

Financial independence is not a central component of this outcome.

Question format: Multiple Choice

Chapter 2: Theories of Aging

Cognitive Level: Analyze

Client Needs: Psychosocial Integrity

Reference: p. 19

8. A 90-year-old client is admitted to a hospital medical unit with a high population of older adults. The nurse notes that the client has been talking about death frequently. Which response by the nurse would be appropriate?

- A. "Try to focus more on the positive benefits of healing rather than what might happen."
- B. "Remember that in this day and age, many people can live far beyond 90 years of age."
- C. "I have noticed you have brought up the issue of dying a lot. Tell me more about how you feel."
- D. "You will find that aiming for health rather than thinking about death will have positive results."

Answer: C

Rationale: Preparing for death has been identified as a developmental task for later life and would be an appropriate topic for discussion given the partnership that exists between the nurse and the client and the client's desire to broach the subject. Telling the client to focus on positive benefits of healing, that the client could live past 90 years, and for the client to aim for health ignores the client's feelings.

Question format: Multiple Choice

Chapter 2: Theories of Aging

Cognitive Level: Apply

Client Needs: Psychosocial Integrity

Integrated Process: Caring

Reference: p. 19

9. A gerontological nurse is conducting a program for a group of nurses who work with older adults. During the program, one of the nurses asks, "Everybody gets old. Why do we need to understand the aging process?" Which response by the nurse would be appropriate?

- A. "It is important because it will help your clients live longer with their long-term disabilities."
- B. "This understanding will help your clients stay younger longer and delay the onset of old age."
- C. "It is crucial so you can help your clients learn to accept their limitations."
- D. "It is important to know what happens to help your clients engage in more positive health practices."

Answer: D

Rationale: The promotion of positive health practices increases the chances that an individual can delay or deter the impairments and declines that frequently accompany the aging process. Living long in a disabled state is not the most desirable objective. Maintaining youth is not an achievable goal. Accepting limitations is not necessary for many seniors and not life enhancing for many others.

Question format: Multiple Choice

Chapter 2: Theories of Aging

Cognitive Level: Apply

Client Needs: Health Promotion and Maintenance

Integrated Process: Nursing Process

Reference: p. 20

10. A gerontological nurse is conducting a program for a group of older adults about aging and the various theories that have been proposed. When describing the programmed theory of aging, which information would the nurse most likely integrate into the discussion to support this theory?

- A. The life spans attained by parents and their offspring are negatively correlated.
- B. Mutations perpetuate themselves through each cycle of cell division.
- C. Cells go through a finite number of cell divisions before dying.
- D. Cells from older donors divide faster than those from younger donors.

Answer: C

Rationale: Studies of in vitro cell proliferation have demonstrated that various species have a finite number of cell divisions, as described by the programmed theory of aging. Life spans of parents and offspring are positively correlated in this theory. Mutation perpetration is a tenet of the error theory, not the programmed theory, of aging. Although longer life spans correlate positively with numbers of cell divisions in vitro, the rate of cell division is not affected.

Question format: Multiple Choice

Chapter 2: Theories of Aging

Cognitive Level: Apply

Client Needs: Health Promotion and Maintenance

Reference: p. 15

11. A gerontological nurse is reviewing a journal article about the biological theories of aging. The article compares and contrasts the error theory of aging and the cross-linking theory of aging. Which information would the nurse expect to find as a common concept?

- A. Free radicals cause mutations in cells.
- B. Senescence is environmentally controlled at the cellular level.
- C. DNA make up at birth leads to organ malfunctions.
- D. Genetic programming determines life expectancy.

Answer: A

Rationale: Both the error theory and the cross-linking theory assert some change in DNA that interferes with normal cell functioning. Such changes may be caused by free radicals or many other mutations. Although the aging of cells may be environmentally influenced, it is not thought to be externally controlled. Genetic programming determining life expectancy is a basic tenet of the programmed theory of aging.

Question format: Multiple Choice

Chapter 2: Theories of Aging

Cognitive Level: Apply

Client Needs: Physiological Integrity: Physiological Adaptation

Reference: p. 14

12. A gerontological nurse is conducting an in-service education program for a group of nurses working at a local senior health center. The nurse is discussing the various theories of aging. The nurse determines that the teaching was successful when the group identifies which concept as common to the error theory of aging and the free radical theory of aging?

- A. Biochemical damage accumulates over time, leading to cell death.
- B. The rate of cellular death is genetically programmed.
- C. The aging body produces fewer growth and repair hormones.
- D. Environmental agents such as radiation and heavy metals damage DNA.

Answer: A

Rationale: The error theory proposes a genetic determination for aging. This theory discusses that genetic mutations are responsible for aging by causing organ decline because of self-perpetuating cellular mutations. The free radical theory proposes that highly unstable, reactive molecules can damage proteins, enzymes, and DNA by replacing molecules that contain useful biological information with faulty molecules that create genetic disorder. Physical decline of the body occurs as the damage from these molecules accumulates over time. The programmed theory of aging has a basic tenet that the rate of cell death is genetically programmed. The neuroendocrine theory discusses that the aging body produces fewer growth and repair hormones. Although radiation and heavy metals may damage DNA, they are not free radicals, and they need not be the cause of the mutations assumed by the error theory.

Question format: Multiple Choice

Chapter 2: Theories of Aging

Cognitive Level: Analyze

Client Needs: Physiological Integrity: Physiological Adaptation

Reference: p. 14-15

13. The nursing staff at a nursing home work closely with the staff in the Endocrinology Department at a local hospital. This relationship is maintained for the welfare of the nursing home residents based on the understanding that a failing immune system in the older adult might account for which of the following?

- A. A decline in the rate of growth hormone production
- B. The increased incidence of cancer
- C. The oxidative activity of free radicals
- D. Changes in brain activity and nervous system function

Answer: B

Rationale: Compromises in the immune systems of the elderly may lead to a failure to recognize and destroy cancerous cells. The immune system is not involved in the production of growth hormones. The immune system does not determine the action of free radicals, although it may be involved in seeking and destroying cells damaged by free radical activity. There is no known association between diminished immune activity and changes in the brain or nervous system action.

Question format: Multiple Choice

Chapter 2: Theories of Aging

Cognitive Level: Understand

Client Needs: Physiological Integrity: Physiological Adaptation

Reference: p. 16

14. A nurse is conducting surveillance about autoimmune disorders affecting the clients admitted to a local acute care facility. The population of clients spans a wide range of age groups, including a large population of older adults. The nurse integrates knowledge of the immune system's effect on the aging process along with the understanding that autoimmune disorders can occur in other populations due to which process?

- A. An attack of antibodies on body cells
- B. An overproduction of T cells in bone marrow
- C. A decrease in the weight of the thymus gland
- D. An increase in the amount of lipofuscin in the blood

Answer: A

Rationale: In autoimmune disorders, the immune system attacks and destroys the body's own cells (as opposed to those of invading, disease-causing microorganisms). There is no overproduction of T cells. Although the weight of the thymus gland decreases with age and the amount of lipofuscin increases, such changes are not characteristic of autoimmune disorders.

Question format: Multiple Choice

Chapter 2: Theories of Aging

Cognitive Level: Understand

Client Needs: Physiological Integrity: Physiological Adaptation

Reference: p. 16

15. A nurse is interviewing a 72-year-old male client with a history of heart disease. He insists that his high-fat diet is permissible because he takes a daily

supplement of an herb purported to reduce blood cholesterol levels. Which action would the nurse perform?

- A. Suggest that the client ask his health care provider for a prescription medication to reduce cholesterol levels.
- B. Review with the client the benefits associated with limiting dietary fat in lowering blood cholesterol levels.
- C. Introduce the client to the additional benefits associated with fish oil supplements.
- D. Advise the client to stop using the herbal supplements because it is not regulated by the FDA.

Answer: B

Rationale: The nurse's first duty is to promote positive health behaviors, which means encouraging the client to limit his fat intake. Herbal supplements are unregulated, and their health benefits may be questionable. Whether fish oil supplements or prescription medications are advisable in this case merits further investigation.

Question format: Multiple Choice

Chapter 2: Theories of Aging

Cognitive Level: Apply

Client Needs: Health Promotion and Maintenance

Integrated Process: Teaching/Learning

Reference: p. 21

16. An 80-year-old female client is gradually withdrawing from society and wants society to gradually withdraw from her. She believes that this mutual withdrawal will free her from societal roles and give society the means for transferring power from the old to the young. The client's grown children are concerned and say her belief has no scientific basis. The nurse interprets the client's beliefs as reflecting which theory of aging?

- A. Activity theory
- B. Developmental tasks theory
- C. Disengagement theory
- D. Continuity theory

Answer: C

Rationale: Disengagement theory views aging as a process in which society and the individual gradually withdraw, or disengage, from each other, to the mutual satisfaction and benefit of both. The activity theory asserts that an older person should continue a middle-aged lifestyle, denying the existence of old age for as long as possible, and that society should apply the same norms to old age as it does to middle age and not advocate diminishing activity, interest, and involvement as its members grow old. Developmental tasks theories are those that describe the process of healthy psychological aging as the result of the successful fulfillment of developmental tasks. These challenges must be met and adjustments must be made in response to life experiences that are part of an adult's continued growth through the life span. The continuity theory of aging relates personality and predisposition toward certain actions in old age to similar factors during other phases of the life cycle. Personality and basic patterns of behavior are said to remain unchanged as the individual ages.

Question format: Multiple Choice
Chapter 2: Theories of Aging
Cognitive Level: Understand
Client Needs: Psychosocial Integrity
Reference: p. 17

17. A nurse is looking to improve the lives of the older adult population. The nurse wants to recommend that health care facilities be required to base their practices on the activity theory of aging. Which area might be problematic with implementing this theory?
- A. The assumption that older people want to maintain their middle-aged lifestyle
 - B. The reluctance of the older adult to give up occupational roles at retirement age
 - C. The decline in mental acuity that accompanies physical impairment in most cases
 - D. Declining levels of social support of the older adult population

Answer: A

Rationale: The activity theory suggests that older adults should maintain their middle-aged lifestyle to the greatest extent possible; a goal not all older adults will embrace. The reluctance of many older adults to give up their middle-aged roles is consistent with the theory. Relatively small numbers of older adults experience a significant decline in mental acuity. Declining levels of social support is an issue the activity theory seeks to minimize.

Question format: Multiple Choice
Chapter 2: Theories of Aging
Cognitive Level: Analyze
Client Needs: Health Promotion and Maintenance
Reference: p. 17-18

18. A 75-year-old client who was friendly and active as a young adult now enjoys visiting with his neighbors and attending a variety of sporting and cultural events. The nurse interprets this client's behavior as reflecting the concepts associated with which theory of aging?
- A. Activity theory
 - B. Developmental tasks theory
 - C. Disengagement theory
 - D. Continuity theory

Answer: D

Rationale: The continuity theory suggests that personality and basic patterns of behavior remain unchanged as an individual ages. The activity theory asserts that an older person should continue a middle-aged lifestyle, denying the existence of old age for as long as possible, and that society should apply the same norms to old age as it does to middle age. However, this client is exhibiting behaviors reflecting his young adult stage, not middle-age. The client is not attempting to address the challenges associated with growing older as proposed by the developmental tasks theory. The client is engaging with others, not withdrawing as reflective of the disengagement theory.

Question format: Multiple Choice

Chapter 2: Theories of Aging
Cognitive Level: Analyze
Client Needs: Psychosocial Integrity
Reference: p. 18

19. A nurse explains all medical options to older adult clients to ensure they have the information they need to make informed decisions about their care. The nurse implements these actions based on which concept?

- A. Full disclosure deters malpractice suits and negligence claims.
- B. The activity theory of aging requires maintenance of lifestyle.
- C. Information is an effective strategy for stress management.
- D. Empowerment has a positive effect on health status.

Answer: D

Rationale: Losing control over one's life can threaten self-confidence and diminish self-care independence. Maximizing control and decision making can have a positive effect on morbidity and mortality although they do not necessarily reduce stress and are not inherent in the activity theory of aging. Even though legal considerations apply, the health of the client is the priority for nurses.

Question format: Multiple Choice
Chapter 2: Theories of Aging
Cognitive Level: Analyze
Client Needs: Health Promotion and Maintenance
Integrated Process: Nursing Process
Reference: p. 21

20. A nurse is assessing a group of older clients for achievement of developmental tasks based on Erikson's theory. Which situation would lead the nurse to suspect that the client would be at risk for disappointment and despair?

- A. An 81-year-old woman has needed to adopt a minced diet following a recent stroke.
- B. A 78-year-old man has needed the help of a home care nurse to assist with changing a wound dressing.
- C. A 90-year-old woman is grieving the recent death of her husband to whom she was married for 66 years.
- D. An 80-year-old man describes himself as "useless" since he is unable to help his adult children with their yard and garden work.

Answer: D

Rationale: A perceived loss of useful function often constitutes a crisis for older men and can be associated with despair rather than integrity in Erikson's typology of the life cycle. A change in diet, a medical intervention, and grief at the loss of a spouse are less closely associated with this conflict.

Question format: Multiple Choice
Chapter 2: Theories of Aging
Cognitive Level: Analyze
Client Needs: Psychosocial Integrity
Reference: p. 19

21. A gerontological nurse is conducting an in-service presentation to a group of nurses working at a long-term care facility about the various theories of aging. When describing the error theory of aging, which step would the nurse describe first?

- A. Organ, tissue, and system malfunction
- B. Perpetuation of mutation during cell divisions
- C. DNA mutation of a single cell
- D. Decline in body functions
- E. Decline in body functions

Answer: C

Rationale: The error theory of aging proposes that DNA mutations occur on a single-cell level first and are perpetuated in subsequent cell divisions. The overall number of mutant cells in the body increases and causes deleterious effects on tissues and systems and eventually, decline in body function.

Question format: Multiple Choice

Chapter 2: Theories of Aging

Cognitive Level: Analyze

Client Needs: Physiological Integrity: Physiological Adaptation

Reference: p. 15