

EDITORIAL

LIFESTYLE AND AGING

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Editor in Chief

The Journal of Aging and Lifestyle

In 2012, under the auspices of the International Association of Gerontology & Geriatrics and the International Academy of Nutrition & Aging, the Journal of Aging Research and Clinical Practice was launched to stimulate academic geriatric medicine worldwide, in particular in developing countries which experience high rates of growth in the older adult population. In its first number, the Journal published articles on the topics of exercise (1), nutrition (2), biological aspects of aging (3), smoking and alcohol consumption (4). Throughout its seven years of life, the Journal has published several papers on lifestyle and related topics. Recognizing the crucial role played by behaviors on the health of individuals and populations during the aging process, the Journal is now evolving its scope to focus on lifestyle-related research. On the sake of consistency, the title of the Journal is also changing, becoming from 2020 onwards the Journal of Aging Research & Lifestyle – JARLife.

Indeed, lifestyle behaviors are major determinants of how we age. The term “lifestyle” is a relatively recent concept in the scientific medical literature. Since its scientific birth in the early 70s, lifestyle research has been linked to the field of gerontology and geriatrics, with the first original report using the term lifestyle in its title being performed in older adults (5). One of the first articles relating the term lifestyle to behaviors that have an impact on health during aging was published by Roy J. Shephard, in 1974 (6); in that paper, the author listed diet, physical activity, and smoking as important determinants of ischemic heart disease. Since this publication, the field of (un)healthy lifestyles and aging has enormously progressed: today, the scientific community consensually recognizes the importance not only of physical activity and exercise (7–9), nutrition-related aspects (8, 10), and

smoking (8,11), but also cognitive-stimulating activities (12), alcohol consumption (13), sedentary time (7) (which should not be understood as a synonym of low physical activity) and other lifestyle behaviors as major determinants of individual’s as well as population’s trajectories of health during the aging process.

According to the Global Burden of Diseases, Injuries, and Risk Factors Study (GBD) (8), worldwide data from 2017 showed that smoking, alcohol consumption, low consumption of whole grains and fruits and high consumption of sodium, and low physical activity levels were amongst the most deleterious unhealthy behaviors in the globe, being responsible for millions of deaths and tens of millions of disability-adjusted life years (DALY). What is less often said, but equally true, is that healthy lifestyle behaviors not only decrease early mortality and the onset and severity of numerous age-related chronic diseases, but also improve functional ability (14) and functional capacities (9, 15, 16) during aging, such as, mobility, cognitive and psychological capacities. Moreover, lifestyles, which are modifiable behaviors, interact with non-modifiable factors (eg, genetics) to determine individuals’ health (17). They may work synergistically in order to determine the quality of individuals’ aging, with the addition of healthy behaviors increasing the chances of experiencing a healthy aging (18).

The absence of a scientific Journal specifically dedicated to the essential topic of lifestyle during aging is no longer a gap for the field of gerontology and geriatrics. The Journal of Aging Research & Lifestyle is committed in publishing high-quality research on all areas related to lifestyle and aging. The Journal has five initial sections that aims to cover the broad spectrum of lifestyle research during aging: 1. Physical activity, exercise and aging; 2. Nutrition and aging; 3. Cognitive stimulation and aging; 4. Geroscience and lifestyle; 5. Digital aspects, lifestyle and aging. Research on other lifestyle topics not covered into the above mentioned sections are also welcome. Original investigations using all types of study designs, from

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observational investigations to interventions, but also qualitative studies, are accepted, as well as other types of articles, such as Reviews, Meta-Analyses, Comments/Perspectives, Letters-to-the-Editor, Methodological papers and Research Protocols. High priority will be given to studies investigating the interactions of multiple health behaviors during aging, in particular, clinical trials of multidomain lifestyle interventions (when two or more lifestyle interventions are combined (19, 20)) as well as observational longitudinal studies that have assessed several lifestyle behaviors over time. Reports using a life-course perspective are also welcome. Although our main focus regards research in humans, cutting-edge animal studies may be considered.

As an exercise scientist and Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Aging Research and Lifestyle, I am honored and pleased to have the possibility to provide, on one hand, a broader space to the scientific community to publish high-quality articles on lifestyle-related topics and, on the other hand, an outstanding tool for researchers and health professionals working in a daily basis to promote healthy behaviors durably during aging. With its international Editorial Board, composed of a mix of senior renowned experts and outstanding young researchers from different backgrounds, the Journal recognizes the importance of cultural aspects on lifestyle behaviors and takes into account the multiplicity of lifestyle-related fields, including (but not limited to): nutrition, exercise, cognitive stimulation, gerosciences and basic sciences, geriatrics, epidemiology, and eHealth. We deliberately opted to have a small, but very motivated and competent Editorial Board, composed of high-level researchers committed in building a successful and scientifically rigorous Journal.

By publishing articles with the highest standards of both scientific quality and clarity in the report, I am convinced the Journal of Aging Research and Lifestyle will foster advances in the field of gerontology and geriatrics, and will facilitate the translation of research findings into clinical practice, with the ultimate aim of contributing to promote a healthy aging all around the world.

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