Chapter 12: Health and Health Care Assignment

Issues and concepts addressed in this chapter. Be prepared to discuss them and use terms appropriately.

1. Why has poor health become associated with old age, and how are recent improvements in health care changing that association? [Know: chronic diseases, epidemiologic transition, health behavior, compression of morbidity thesis]

2. How do people’s lifestyles and social support systems affect their health in old age? [Know: health lifestyle, effects of smoking, exercise, alcohol consumption, diet]

3. What is the best measure of an elderly person’s socioeconomic status, and how is SES connected to a person’s health? [Know: theory of cumulative disadvantage, convergence theory]

4. How do gender, race, and ethnicity affect an older person’s health? [Know: adverse mortality selection process]

5. How have changes in Medicare and the health care industry affected older Americans? [Know: fee-for-service, health maintenance organization (HMO), managed care, capitation, Prospective Payment System (PPS), diagnostic-related groupings (DRGs), Medigap policies]

Assignment: This chapter makes it clear that lifestyle, socioeconomic status, gender, and race/ethnicity all affect the health status of older persons. Choose one of these factors and discuss what we know about the impact of that factor on health status. Based on this knowledge, outline one program or policy that you feel would be effective at improving the health status of elders in general or of a targeted group (like women, poor, racial/ethnic minorities).

This assignment should be 1-2 pages long. Cite any outside resources you used. 20 points. We will use your ideas in class discussion.
Resources on Health and Aging

For most of the major topics we will discuss and study this term, I will provide you a list of Internet and research resources, to help you stay up-to-date in the field and to find research and resources useful in your future work.

The Centers for Disease Control and the National Center for Health Statistics (http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/) has an area called “Aging Activities.” You will find longitudinal studies, fact sheets on trends in health and aging, and other resources.

The Agency for Health Care Policy and Research (http://www.ahrp.gov) has full research reports on various health conditions and reports on healthcare provision for the aging.

The World Health Organization (http://www.who.int/ageing) has extensive resources on aging, including fact sheets, demographic and epidemiological studies, and links to international health and aging sites.

Other sites of interest include:

Administration on Aging (http://www.aoa.dhhs.gov)
National Institute on Health and Aging (http://www.nih.gov/nia/)
National Mental Health Association (http://www.nmha.org)
Health and Human Services Resource Center for Women with Disabilities (http://www.4woman.gov)