

but does not greatly affect the timing of retirement. This finding is in line with predictions based on the authors' earlier theoretical research. They conclude that the institutional restrictions implied by the social security system shut down an important mechanism by which individuals may adjust to increased longevity (namely working longer). This is certainly an important finding, but in my view the interpretation leaves open the issue of why retirement ages are implicitly or explicitly fixed in so many countries. One is aware that countries such as France, Italy and Germany are currently experiencing strong, if not violent, public resistance against increasing the statutory retirement age. This observation is in stark contrast to a theoretical model that predicts that the public should be lobbying *for* increases in the retirement age. More research is certainly needed on this important public policy issue, and the analysis presented by Bloom and colleagues in this chapter and elsewhere is a good start.

The chapter by Hock and Weil presents a state-of-the-art analysis of the effects of population ageing on aggregate consumption. This is a broad research question, and the authors naturally concentrate on a few aspects. The central question asked is: What is the level of fertility that maximises the consumption possibilities of the currently living and of all future generations? To answer this question, they construct a 'continuous-time overlapping generations' model, and calibrate it using demographic data from the United States and Japan. Their main finding is that current fertility levels are too low – in the long-run consumption would be higher if fertility rates were higher. The authors also show that while governments should implement policies that raise fertility, it will be difficult to get public approval since the benefits of such policies come to fruition only a few decades ahead. In the short run, having more children creates a greater fiscal burden. This chapter highlights a well-known problem: demographic processes evolve very slowly, and optimal policies are hard to implement when they benefit only future generations, not current voters.

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Patricia J. Kolb (ed.), *Social Work Practice with Ethnically and Racially Diverse Nursing Home Residents and Their Families*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2007, 276 pp., hbk £41, ISBN 13: 978 0 231 12532 1.

Described as the 'first of its kind' in its publicity material, this book provides detailed and often moving insights into the lives of older African-American, American-Indian, Chinese, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Mexican-American and Puerto Rican people and their families. There are eight chapters on, among other things, life ways, beliefs and histories of each of the above groups of people, and a final conclusion. The purpose of the book is to present health and social-care workers with information about older adults from different ethnic groups and their families in the United States. The aim is to provide staff with enough information to be able to begin to work in culturally appropriate ways with diverse

nursing home residents and their families. It is recognised that socio-economic change and the loss of the traditional family structure has made care away from a person's family necessary for many people who would not in the past have considered long-term care.

Each chapter begins with at least one illustrative case study, and then proceeds to bring meaning to the scenarios described by sensitively presenting vital information about histories, traditional ways, migration experiences, racism and exploitation as well as family systems and conceptions of health and illness. Based on the evidence provided by the specialist authors of each chapter, suggestions are made as to how each group of elders is likely to find the transition into long-term care. The authors make constructive suggestions about ways staff can support elders and their families to help to maintain quality of life in residential settings. The first chapter reveals the experiences of African-American elders, having struggled with an unsatisfactory segregated health system for much of their adult lives, and the way this manifests as apparent reluctance to present for health and social-care support. The rarely reported history of the 'American-Indian Boarding School' system is featured in Chapter 2. These establishments were set up after the *Indian Civilization Act*, and it was estimated that over one-half of American-Indian children were sent to these establishments during the 1930s and 1940s. There, the children were victims of horrific abuse, and many have never spoken of their experiences. The author makes the point that those children are now aged in their seventies and eighties, and as potential users of care services are at risk of this unresolved emotional trauma resurfacing when moving to nursing home settings.

The chapter devoted to Chinese-American people has quite detailed accounts of the immigration history and of attitudes to nursing-home placement. Care is taken to describe end-of-life needs for Chinese-American people, whose traditional expectation that death should occur at home surrounded by family can make admission for care a very distressing experience. Detailed consideration is given of the experience of Italian immigrants in Chapter 4, including early anti-Italian and anti-Catholic feeling; inter-family dynamics and the sense of abandonment felt by many elders on admission to long-term care. The history of the internment of Japanese-Americans during the Second World War is a reminder of the risk to Japanese older people of reawakening past emotional trauma in later life. The importance of staff involving families in the care and support of older Japanese people is emphasised; particularly in relation to understanding the high value placed on harmony as opposed to individualism, which can lead to elders concealing their own ill-being to spare care staff's feelings. The stigma associated with mental illness among Korean-American elders is a feature of Chapter 6. The tendency not to depend on others for emotional well-being can lead to difficulties building therapeutic relationships with professional practitioners. Traditional values generally are explained in a very accessible way.

The importance of spirituality, strong family obligations and the responsibility of the youngest daughter to provide care for older parents in Mexican-American families is raised as a risk factor for concealed carer stress. The author explains how if the youngest daughter does not meet the expectations of her parents she may be considered disrespectful, which might lead some women who are

struggling with their caring responsibilities to conceal their need for support. The book's final chapter gives a detailed introduction to the diverse demography, socio-economic status, culture, citizenship, spirituality and beliefs of Puerto Rican elders.

The conclusion is short, and summarises the important differences in the experience of diverse ethnic groups. There is a list of recommendations to promote culturally appropriate social work, emphasising partnership, networking and the need for education about different cultural backgrounds and experiences. This is definitely a book that will appeal to practitioners and students in the United States and those considering studying and working there. It is accessible, informative and contributes constructively to advancing culturally appropriate care.

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Bob Woods and Linda Clare (eds), *Handbook of the Clinical Psychology of Ageing*, second edition, Wiley, Chichester, West Sussex, 2008, 656 pp., hbk £110.00, ISBN 13: 978 0 470 01230 7.

The first edition of the *Handbook of the Clinical Psychology of Ageing* was published in 1996. This volume represents impressive change during the last decade in response to the new demands and opportunities faced by psychologists when the world population continues to age, and brings along its unique psychological challenges and mental health needs. This second edition of the *Handbook* has 34 chapters grouped into five topic areas: ageing, psychological problems; service context; assessment; and intervention. The first section on ageing covers the key aspects of the normal ageing processes and provides the necessary context for the understanding of the common psychological problems outlined in the next section. The clinical features of depression, anxiety, late-onset psychosis, trauma, dementia and stroke in older people are all outlined succinctly, with updated and relevant references that will enable clinicians to further their interest in specific topics. The detailed discussion of the important aspects of the service context for clinical psychology in later life includes palliative care for people with dementia and the situation of people with intellectual disabilities – new chapters absent from the first edition. The next section addresses the assessment aspects of clinical practice. It covers the assessment of cognitive functioning, mood, behaviour and quality of life; with numerous useful signposts regarding assessment tools specifically designed for older people. Finally, the nine chapters under intervention include cognitive behavioural therapy, psychoanalysis, systematic intervention, neuropsychological rehabilitation, working with dementia issues, and interventions at the care-team level. They evince the upsurge over the last two decades of systematic and practical research on a wide range of clinical interventions for mental health problems among older people.

The difference between the first and the second edition of the *Handbook* is vast. Only one chapter, 'Family caregiving: research and clinical intervention',