

Age, Gender, and Ethnic Differences in Functional Health

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Abstract

The purpose of this longitudinal study was to investigate age (60, 80, and 100 years), gender, and ethnicity (Black and White) differences and changes in functional health in older adults from the Georgia Centenarian Study. We examined three functional health areas: IADL (Instrumental Activities of Daily Living), PADL (Physical Activities of Daily Living), and overall ADL (Activities of Daily Living) of 321 participants on phase 1 (1988-1992), and 201 participants on phase 2 (1992-1997). The results indicate that instrumental activities of daily living and physical activities of daily living decreased over time $F(1, 171) = 50.31, p < .001$, and $F(1, 175) = 12.73, p < .001$, respectively. Age differences were also found for instrumental and physical activities of daily living, $F(2, 171) = 96.37, p < .001$, and $F(2, 175) = 19.68, p < .001$, respectively. Interaction for age and time on IADL and PADL were also found $F(2, 171) = 10.11, p < .001$, and $F(2, 175) = 5.08, p < .01$, respectively, indicating that centenarians reported a decrease over time on IADL and PADL compared to younger age groups. Ethnic differences on functional health were also found, $F(1, 160) = 5.84, p < .05$, indicating that White but not Black participants showed a significant decline on functional health.