

ENG 1023.51

Mr. Evans

April 26, 2013

Topic: Capstone Project

The Elongation of Life

People today are living longer than ever. There has always been a quest for the elongation of life; however, the ordeal of dealing with the aging process has always been a dreaded factor. Ordeal indeed it is, when the many variables for this quest are considered. Special consideration for quality of health and medical, housing, food and clothing are just some of the many facets of living longer that makes life's longevity sometimes feel like a blessing or a curse. Overall, these issues results in financial burden. We are now living longer, but what a cost. The elongation of life can be received as a blessing or a curse, depending on the quality of life. Many people are living longer, the problem is no one wants to grow old, causing many people to combat the challenges of aging unexpectedly and unprepared.

Man has always searched for the fountain of youth, believing it to take the sting out of life. In the web article "Fountain of Youth – Just Wishful Thinking?" Willie Drye wrote about the historical myth of the early 1500's, which tell how the Spanish explorer Ponce de Leon went looking for the fountain of youth along the coast of Florida that was never found (National Geographic). Rather than to continue to search for a mythical fountain that really does not exist, man has relegated to adjusting to the bumps and bruises of the inevitable, and that is to just live with growing old. One of the widest read books in the world, The Holy Bible, records the oldest living human of the biblical days, as Methuselah, a man who "lived to be 969 years of age" (Genesis 5:27). Nobody lives to be that old today. According to the Guinness World Records,

Jonathan Evans 5/19/13 9:45 PM

Comment [1]: Dear (STUDENT NAME WITHELD),

Before I launch into my notes, I want to point out a few things about how I will be grading:

1. I will be looking at your formatting – have you followed the template, do you have all aspects your project should include (see the Description in the WA 4 Prompt). Have you met the requirements (8-10 pages in length).
2. Do you apply strong MLA formatting throughout your paper and have good quality in your research?
3. How well have you applied and blended the three genres?
4. How good is your content – have you made a good argument?

General Comment:

Work on improving your thesis to better guide your paper. Work on formatting and in-text citations a bit more but good start.

For specific comments, please see my notes below.

If there are any questions or confusion, email me.

Mr. Evans

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Comment [2]: Work on this, make it more direct to your audience what you are setting to do in your paper via your thesis/argument.

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Comment [3]: In-text you can save the "specific bible translation" for the works cited and just give the book, chapter and verse here.

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“122 years and 164 days” is the longest any person has ever lived; also their records state as of today, the oldest person living is presently 114 years of age” (Guinnessworldrecords.com). Surely, these long lived years have come at some cost.

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Comment [4]: ? – Where is the actual closing quotations suppose to go, you have two here.

Growing old is out of our control. Each stage of life comes with challenges that must be mentally prepared for. Some elderly are growing old gracefully, enjoying their golden years, while others find it difficult to cope with the challenges that come with life’s elongation that feel more like olden years. In the arena of the quality of health and medical, with the aging process the elderly have come to find an increase in the physical limitations of walking, talking and hearing. Many of these physical limitations are a result of the cursed stoke and cardiovascular accidents known as heart attacks that comes with aging. Today, these types of accidents do not necessarily mean death, because modern medicals can pop an individual back from the other side, which often results in a declined quality of life. The advancement of modern medicine is one the major reasons people are living longer. The job market is on the rise in the medical industry for careers in meeting the needs of those who are the minimal to severely disabled elderly. In getting older and living longer there is for certain declination in health, and the medical industry has capitalized and jumped on the bandwagon to the sum of billions of dollars. It has been a financial blessing for society that job creation has resulted from the pursuit to prolong life; however, it can create a financial curse for those who are not monetarily provided for.

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Comment [5]: I do not understand what you mean by this at all. Everyone grows old, it happens, are you saying that more people are living longer than before and this is something that has not been true before now?

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The driving forces of innovation and compassion have fueled the market for inventions that aid in walking, such as the four-wheelers and motorized scooter vehicles, which help with mobility. It is not just the walker with the tennis balls and wheels on it’s legs anymore; mobility for the elderly has moved beyond that job creation. From the results of strokes, people have had to learn how to talk all over again. According to Bureau of Labor Statistics, future opportunity

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for a “Speech – Language Pathologist” appears to be on the rise. As recorded in their occupational outlook handbook:

Employment is expected to grow by 23 percent from 2010 to 2020, faster than the average for all occupations. As the large baby-boom population grows older, there will be more instances of health conditions that cause speech or language impairments, such as strokes, brain injuries, and hearing loss. This will result in increased demand for speech-language pathologists. (Bls.gov)

Physical therapist occupational increase will also result in increase primarily for the same reasons as speech pathologist. Hence, long life also results in job or career opportunities. Both of these fields help restoring motor function in a decrepit aging population. Rehabilitation facilities have become a mainstay in our communities.

Loss of hearing is just one that just seems to come with the aging territory, and how innovative when the hearing devices of today can be found to be no larger than a thumbnail. All produce a trickle down effect into jobs. Jobs needed in helping to meet the needs of simply making growing old more tolerable.

The basic needs of life are aspects that can make longevity of life a blessing or sometimes feel like a curse. Shelter is a critical aspect of basic living. A vast majority of senior citizens remain independent through the development of specialized senior living communities. Senior living retirement communities is a booming business and a money making machine for its investors. These communities cater to senior needs depending on their quality of life. Special program directors are in place to assure their needs are met; however, at a cost. Most of these communities are geared toward those who are pretty much financially endowed. There are also communities in place for those elderly who are in the lower economic income bracket. The more costly, the more the ritzy and available are the amenities. These communities also consist in range from those who are in assisted living situations to those who are engrossed in the mind

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boggled ordeal of dementia and Alzheimer. Those elderly who live to the foggy minded stages of Alzheimer and dementia are more apt to seem cursed rather than blessed with age.

Many elderly rather than live independently in designated retirement communities have made the decision to live with loved ones. An array of the elderly, are housed with family members who oversee every aspect of their life, from dusk to dawn. While family members are happy to tout a five generation threshold, the eldest generation often becomes an emotional and physical burden. As aging elements began to set in, this living arrangement often comes at a cost to the family. Time and money become huge expenditures. Some families become distraught and torn apart based on having to make life sustaining decisions regarding their elderly loved ones. Insurmountable amounts of time have to be designated and set for the aged family member. Outside help has to be hired in many cases. Adult daycare centers are on the rise, as researcher confirmed in the web article, "The National Voice for the Adult Day Service Community," reporting that "over 4,600 adult day centers the United State...in more than 260,000 participants and family caregivers are serviced" (NADSA). Doctors issue prescriptions for home healthcare services to assist with hygiene and nutrition issues. Aged loved ones sometimes become a burden and can make the family feel cursed rather than blessed to have them there.

Nutrition is a major concern. Even food is a specialized item because of special prescribed diets for the aging. Nutritionist is another booming career in helping seniors who are in need of specialized diets. Special diets for those who are diabetics and those who are in need of low sodium, high protein, and those with vitamin deficiencies are major targets for nutritionist. Also, innovation of special pieces of kitchen equipment that aid in pureeing, and mixing food products for these diets are on the rise, such as the Magic Bullet, and juicers.

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The shoes and undergarments business is another trail blazed avenue that is reaping the benefits of growing old. Specialized areas in the development of shoes and clothing have come with special needs of an aging population. SAS, Red Cross and Red Wing Shoes are often called old people shoe stores. Never mind the style or how they look; they serve their purpose for comfort. These stores have flourished from the need of orthopedic type shoes. The need for these type of shoes are often due to medical issues such as diabetes and feet swelling. Undergarments such as Depends (grown up diapers) have been developed for the incontinent and special breast wear for the elderly women who have undergone mastectomies. The elderly has become a specialized area of human interest and there are specialized needs that must be considered and must be met in attending to this populous of people.

Now, many may say, 'age ain't nothing but a number,' but when factoring in the numbers and considering all the health conditions that go along with it, let the curse begin. Another saying goes, 'age is wasted on the youth,' because they don't know what to do with it. Now, that should be the real curse. American author Mark Twain, during his twilight years, noted that "life would be infinitely happier if we could only be born at the age of 80 and gradually approach 18" (qtd. in Dyre). In reality, living longer is not for the faint of heart, they must look out for the challenges that lie ahead, especially when it comes to the quality of their pocket book.

As indicated earlier, people want to live a long life, but the problem is they do not want to grow old in the process. In the article, "Depression and Suicide in the Elderly," Roberta Caponey asserts that, "old age is one of life's thresholds that few of us in midlife are emotionally and psychologically prepared for" (Focusonthefamily.com). Acceptance is a key to growing old gracefully, in conjunction with the acceptance of the various ramifications that comes along with

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it. These are the normal bumps and bruises of life that comes with aged. Some elderly are growing old gracefully, defining their seasoned years as being more of the golden, rather than just olden. In an article, "What Makes the Golden Years Great?" Miranda Hitti, a WebMD health news editor, presented a Canadian study which reported, "The keys to a high-quality life after age 60 are health, money, and having a meaningful life" (quoted in Hitti). This study indicates that, you don't have to be in the greatest of shape, bank millions, or have all of life's answers to be in high spirits in your golden years, but those are thoughts to dwell upon in shaping your life (Hitti). In other words, one's view point can affect one's point of view. The editor questioned the study, stating the majority of the participants were of good living, financial, educational, and health status. It is unclear if the results included people after age 60 of the opposite status..." (Hitti). There are two sides to every story, the good and the bad; the upside and the downside, the blessed and the curse.

The downside to aging can be quite challenging. If one's view point on the quality of life is in good status, the blessing is intact; however, if the opposite exist the curse is in tow. Sadly, there are many elderly having difficulties coping with the pressures of the latter. There is a rise in elderly depression and suicide. Fear of declining health, declining wealth and the misery that comes with the impact are some of the aging challenges that lead to despair. Those elderly who are finding it difficult to cope with the challenges of living longer have resorted to acts of self destruction, choosing the rash decision of suicide as an easy way out in dealing with their pain. A web article, "Suicide Assessment in the Elderly," statistically reported that "elderly make up 12% of the population (US) but represent 16% of the suicides" (Brown). In most cases, these suicidal acts are planned, well thought out, by this point the seniors have mentally reach their peak of life's pressure.

Although, clinical depression can occur at any age, more seniors progress to this point. Also, stated in the web article, “Depression and Suicide in the Elderly” written by Caponey are statistics that reports depression is epidemic among the aged, reporting according to one study, “20-25 percent of the elderly in nursing homes are clinically depressed” (qtd in Caponey). Depression is an increasingly detrimental life issue among the aged. So many of the elderly are suffering with the onset of depleted mental conditions, such as dementia and Alzheimer, while physically, remaining intact. This is causing so many of the elderly to define their elongated years as being disastrous. Caponey reports, “Every day in the United States, 17 adults over the age of 65 commit suicide – the highest suicide rate of any demographic group” (Focusonthefamily.com). That is a realistic statistical report because, when the term, “elderly suicide” is googled, it leads to endless past and present stories of murder-suicide among the aged. Caponey further states, “... unlike young people – those for whom an attempted suicide is more often a “cry for help” – elderly people who attempt suicide usually succeed” (Focusonthefamily.com). In releasing their hold on life, they relieve themselves of the agony of their pain and suffering. Dr. Elisa Thompson, a specialist in human development and aging issues states that, “those who do leave notes often state such reasons as despair, the desire to escape suffering, economic and financial problems and a fear of burdening family members” (qtd in Caponey). These dreaded factors discourage the will to live. Caponey argues that, “Clinical depression, unlike the occasional case of “the blues,” is a real, treatable illness, with symptoms as predictable as the symptoms of any other disease” ((Focusonthefamily.com). Most of the time the diagnosis for this disease, although treatable, is not actualized until after the catastrophic event of suicide has occurred.

Is living longer a blessing or is it a curse? That depends on the quality of life. It is costing people to live longer. In the many aspects of long life, there is the factor of astronomical monetary cost that serves as the common denominator. Long living is a blessing, but the cost of having long life comes with measurable stipulations, and the major measurable stipulation seems to be money. The cost alone is a curse. Specialized needs cost money. Special needs are not accessible to all due to the money factor, but should be made economically accessible to all, providing a level playing field. Nowadays, long life is determined by the worth of your pocketbook not just by your genes. It is imperative that as a society that is fixated on living longer, that we must prepare for this elongation of life mentally, physically, emotionally and spiritually. These are the essential realities of our quest, only then will this yearning be satisfied. The reason why some people in general do not want to survive any kind of catastrophic health event or occurrence is because they have witness people in debilitated conditions of survival.

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