



## HEALTH AND WELL-BEING: A UNIVERSAL REMEDY TO LONG LIFE

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**Abstract:** The study x-rayed on what health and well-being is all about. That is the concepts of health and wellbeing. It looked at the components of health, which includes: mental, physical, emotional, social and environmental health. Also, the study examined the components of well-being to be: physical, economic, emotional, social, life satisfaction, developmental and psychological well-being. Furthermore, it looked at factor that promotes good health. The reason why health and well-being are remedy to long life, were identified, which includes: prepare your body for long life by exercising, be proactive about identifying and treating health problems, avoid high risk behaviour, avoid toxic substances, avoid excessive alcohol intake, quit smoking and using nicotine product, protect your psychological well-being by maintain close social relationships, stay resilient by sleeping enough, stay excited about life through hobbies, and cultivate happiness. Also, Carol Ryff's Psychological model of well-being with six strategies was used to support the study. It was recommended that further researcher should endeavour to carry out an empirical study on health and wellbeing; its importance for national development. Book writers and course developers should incorporate health and well-being into psychology curriculum. Government should enact a law that will make it imperative for the indigents and the lower cadre in our society-Nigeria, to have free and compulsory access to health care services, since they are the most vulnerable to health challenges.

**Keywords:** Health, Wellbeing, Universal remedy to long life.

### Introduction

A healthy man is one who is happy and fulfilled, not exclusively to riches, lack of illness or disease etc. This is so because, he (the man) will help in the development of himself, his micro-family, the community and by extension the entire society at large where he finds himself. There is a proverbial saying that "a healthy man is a wealthy man", which corroborates with the preceding statements.

No one will attempt to disclaim the value of good health, for people to cherish the ability to carry on routine activities undeterred by disease or other form of incapacitation. Most people also value longevity, peace, and happiness. Interestingly, good health and well-being is key to all these (Abanobi, 2009).

### The Concept of Health

It is difficult to find agreement as to what constitutes health or what that concept really mean. If you ask your friends what health is all about, you will be amaze on the answers, most + say that a person is healthy when he is free of disease. That is, he is healthy when he is not ill. Some will add that one is healthy when he has no symptoms of disease, no pain or no disability but these people are not really saying much more (Abanobi, 2009). Health, according to World Health Organization WHO in Abanobi (2009), is a state of complete, physical, mental, social, spiritual and occupational well-being not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Peay (1980), seas health as that state of moral, mental and physical well-being which enables a person to face any crisis in life with the utmost grace and facility. Pulga in Abanobi

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(2009), opined that it is the condition under which the individual, is able to mobilize all his resources, intellectual, emotional, and physical for optimum living.

From the above definitions of what constitutes health, it was deduced that discrepancy exist amongst persons, organizations and professions to what health is all about. These health promotion experts assertion, can be achieved according to the researcher, by adopting healthful life style, which includes, but not limited to regular exercise, proper dietary choices, maintenance of proper body weight, avoiding inappropriate use of drugs, including cigarette smoking, alcohol intake, recognition of symptoms early and giving effective treatment to it, always keeping your environment clean etc. Also, it is the consequence of our individual and collective behaviour, a reflection of our ability to maintain stable emotional status and co-exist with other people (Abanobi, 2009).

### Components

The components of health will be discussed under the following headings:

- **Emotional health:** the help guide (2016), describes emotionally healthy people as possessing: A sense of contentment; A zest for life, the ability and purpose in life, the flexibility to learn and adapt, the ability to balance work and play, the capability to create and maintain relationships, high levels of self-confidence and self-esteem. It is an authentic understanding of what truly makes us happier.
- **Social Health:** Is seen as the ability to form meaningful relationships with other people and interact in healthy positive ways. The way you contact with people around you, adapt to different social situations, and experience a sense of belonging and the application of laws and regulations, all amount to good health, (Vann, 2009).
- **Environmental Health:** WHO (1999), sees it as those aspects of human health and disease that

are determined by factors in the environment. It also refers to the theory and practice of assessing and controlling factors in the environment that can potentially affect health.

WHO (2016), states “environmental health addresses all the physical, chemical and biological and all related factors external to a person.

- **Physical Health:** Is when one is working at peak performance, due not only to lack of disease, but also to regular exercise, balanced nutrition, and adequate rest. You receive treatment when necessary as to maintain the balance. It involves pursuing a healthful lifestyle to decrease the risk of disease. Physical health also helps to reduce the risk of an injury or health use. For instance, minimizing hazards in the work place, practicing safe sex, practicing good hygiene, avoiding the use of tobacco, alcohol or illegal drugs, among others.
- **Mental Health:** According to WHO “is a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution, in his or her community.

### Factors that Promote Good Health

WHO (2014), suggested that the following factors may have a bigger impact on health:

- **Where the person lives:** The state of the surrounding environment, genetic, income, educational level, relationships with friends and family.

These can be summarized into:

- **The socio-economic environment:** Includes how wealthy or financially buoyant family or person is.



- **The physical environment:** Which includes, parasites that exist in the area, or pollution levels.

The person's characteristics and behaviour: That is the genes that a person is born with and their lifestyle choices. According to WHO, "the higher a person's social-economic status (SES), the more likely they are to enjoy good health, good education, a well-paid job, afford good health care, when it is been threatened.

On the other hand, people with low social-economic status, are more likely to experience stresses related to daily living, such as financial difficulties, marital disruption and unemployment, as well as social factors like marginalization and discrimination. Also, low social-economic status, makes the individual to have low access to health facilities and services.

#### Concept of Well-being

At optimal state of health, the individual is able to effectively or optimally perform the roles and tasks for which he has been socialized relative to his state of well being or wellness.

MacDonald in Abanobi (2009), stated that well-being is welfare, happiness and prosperity and good body health. WHO (1975) in their own view, sees well-being as the state of being comfortable, healthy or happy. It includes having good mental health, high life satisfaction, and a sense of meaning or purpose. Also well-being is the highest possible quality of life in its full breath of expression focused on but not necessarily exclusive to: good living robust health, a sustainable environment, vital communities, an educated populace, balanced time use, high level of democratic participation, and access to leisure and culture (Wikipedia, updated, 2019). In this study, well-being and wellness will be used interchangeably. That is, the two concepts mean the same thing.

From the above definitions of wellbeing/wellness, Abanobi (2009), summarizes that well-being or wellness "Is the relative aliveness of an individual. That is it does not only addresses one's current state of health, but the

potential to one's life prolonged as a result of specific behaviours and functional capacities".

Other health behaviours that promote wellness, according to him, includes: informed use of health and medical goods and services in ways that do not compromise our health; broad range of safety measures, and precautions taken in our homes, playground, and our work places and around all areas of human activity.

#### Components of Well-being

- **Physical Well-being:** Is all about looking after one's physical health. That is been active physically and maintaining weight.
- **Economic well-being:** Has to do with one having future financial security. Also, it includes the ability to make economic choices and feel a sense of security, satisfaction, and personal fulfillment with one's personal finances and employment pursuits.
- **Emotional Well-being:** This enables an individual to be able to function in society and meet the demands of everyday life.
- **Social well-being:** It has to do with the extent to which one feels a sense of belonging and social inclusion; a connected person is a supported person in society. Also, it is important to note that individual's lifestyle, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs are all pertinent to our social wellbeing.
- **Life satisfaction well-being:** Is a favourable attitude towards one's life rather than an assessment of current feelings. Life satisfaction has been measured in relation to economic standing, degree of education, experiences, residence, among many other topics.
- **Developmental Well-being:** Describes the developing human's response to experiences and environmental circumstances.



- **Psychological well-being:** Consists of positive relationships with others, personal mastery, autonomy, a feeling of purpose and meaning to life and personal growth and development.

#### **Why is health and well-being, a remedy for long life?**

There are many uncertainties in life, and no one can predict how long he will live, but taking good care of yourself can help increase your chances of living a long life. That is taking care of your physical and psychological health by living a healthy lifestyle, following a healthy diet and keeping your stress under control (Sharl-Forschem, updated, 2019).

Also, according to Diener & Chan (2011), although “happiness is no magic bullet”, happiness might not by itself prevent or cure disease, the evidence is clear that it “changes odds of getting disease or dying young. Also, positive emotions and enjoyment of life contributes to better health and longer life span”, they asserted.

Diener et al., (2011), concluded by saying that “the overwhelming majority of studies support that happiness is associated with health longevity”.

Sharl-Forschem (2019), enunciated the following points as remedies to long life.

1. **Prepare your body for a long life by exercising:** Exercise benefits both your physical and mental health. The physical activity strengthens your body, it helps you to control your body weight and improves balance and coordination. Simultaneously, your body releases endorphins which will help you relax and feel good. Endorphins can also reduce pains and improve your mood.
2. **Be proactive about identifying and treating health problems:** Preventive care is important for identifying health problems before they become a major concern. It is also important to identifying lifestyle factors – like (smoking alcohol intake, poor diet, lack of exercise etc), familial history (past occurrences or history of

sickness that runs in a family), and work exposure amongst others that may leads to the development of disease or dysfunction.

3. **Avoid high risk behaviour:** Accidents including, during sports or driving, are frequent causes of head trauma and spinal injuries.
  - Drive carefully, wear your seatbelt, and obey speed limits
  - Use caution when crossing the street as pedestrian, look both ways to see if there are cars around.
  - Wear appropriate protective and safety gear when playing sports, particularly risk sports like, football, horseback riding, rock climbing etc.
4. **Avoid toxic substances:** It is important to avoid substances that may increase your chances of developing health problems. These include: pollutants, (ozone, carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, lead, nitrogen etc), pesticides, etc.
5. **Avoid Excessive Alcohol Intake:** If you do drink, it is important that you drink moderately.
  - Excessive drinking can make you more likely to get cancer of the digestive tract, heart problems, strokes, high blood pressure, liver disease, etc.
  - If you do drink, be careful not to mix it with medicines, which may cause drug reactions among others.
6. **Quit Smoking and using nicotine product:** Even if you have smoked or used other nicotine products for many years, quitting will still improve your health and help you live longer. Smoking greatly, increases your risks of: Lung disease, including cancer, Heart attacks, strokes, diabetics, eye disorders like cataracts, respiratory infections, gum disease etc.
7. **Protect your psychological well-being by maintaining close social relationships.**



- Maintain your social network, though corresponding by writing, telephone, or in person, using social media can also help people stay connected.
- Regular social interaction will help you relax and take your mind off your stress.
- If you feel isolated, consider locating a support group or counselor for help.

#### 8. Stay Resilient by sleeping enough

If you don't have enough sleep, you are compounding the psychological stressors in your life with the physical stress of sleep deprivation. It is advisable to sleep for at least seven to eight hours, per night. It makes you to be strong and relaxed.

#### 9. Stay excited about life through hobbies:

Always engage yourself in reading, listening to good music, art for photography, crafts or sports etc.

- Avoid competitive activities that will put additional pressures on you.

#### 10. Cultivate happiness: Take time to enjoy life and do the things that make your life meaningful to you.

- Do activities that give you sense of purpose.

Nourish your The Carol Ryff's model of psychological well-being is more suitable or appropriate to support this study. This is as result of the relationship it has with the article (Health and wells being as remedy to long life).

According to Ryff, "the model is not all about happiness or positive emotions alone, but went further to state that "a good life is balanced and whole, engaging each of the different aspect of well-being, instead of being narrowly focused. She (Ryff) roots this principle in Aristotle's Nicho Macheam Ethics, "where the goal of life isn't feeling 9ood, but is instead about living virtuously". The Carol Ryff's model of psychological well-being are in six categories. In each of the categories, it has strong and weak side of it. They are:

- (1) **In the high self-acceptance:** Is where one possesses a positive attitude towards itself; acknowledging both good and bad qualities; and feel positive about your past life. While low-self-acceptance, is a situation where one feels dissatisfied with itself; you're disappointed with what has occurred in your past life; you're troubled about certain personal qualities: and wish to be different than what you are.
- (2) **Personal growth:** In strong growth, you see yourself as growing and expanding. You are open to new experiences; have the sense of realizing potentials; see improvement in yourself and behaviour overtime; you see yourself as changing in ways that reflect more self-knowledge and effectiveness. In the case of weak personal growth, is a situation where one has a sense of personal stagnation; lacks the sense of improvement or expansion overtime; feels bored and uninterested with life; and feels unable to develop new attitudes or behaviours.
- (3) **Purpose in life:** The strong purpose in life, talks about, you having a goal in life and a sense of directedness; feels there is meaning to your present and past life; holds beliefs that give life purpose; and have aims and objectives for living. Weak purpose in life, talks about lacking sense of meaning in life; have few goals or arms, lacks sense of direction; do not see purpose of your past life and have no outlook or beliefs that give life meaning.
- (4) **Positive Relations with others:** In strong positive relations, .you have warm, satisfying, trusting relationships with others; they are concerned about the welfare of others; are capable of strong empathy, affection, and intimacy, and understanding the give and take human relationships. Whereas, weak relation, talks about one having few close, trusting



relationships with others; finds it difficult to be warm, open and concerned about others; they are isolated and frustrated in interpersonal relationships; and are not willing to make compromises to sustain important ties with others.

(5) **Environmental Mastery:** In high environmental mastery, you have a sense of mastery and competence in managing the environment; complex array of external activities; make effective use of surrounding opportunities; and are able to choose or create contexts suitable to your personal needs and values. In the case of low environmental mastery, you have difficulty in managing every day affairs; feels unable to change or improve surrounding contexts; are unaware of surrounding opportunities; and lack a sense of control over the external world.

(6) **Autonomy:** High Autonomy people are self-determining and independent; are able to resist social pressures to think and act in a certain way; regulates behaviour from within; and evaluates oneself by personal standards. Whereas, the low autonomy people, are concerned about the expectations and evaluations and others; and conforms to social pressures to think, and act in certain ways.

Carol Ryff's model of psychological well-being provides a powerful framework through which to analyze or organize one's life and generate ideas about how to live better.

- The strong aspect (positive side or high) of the strategies as specified in the Carol Ryff's model of psychological well-being, corroborates with the concepts health and well-being and their components, hence very suitable or have its brain with intellectual stimulation. Whether it comes from friends, family, or taking informal courses

or taking up a new craft. These, will keep enthusiastic about the world around you.

### Recommendations

- Future researchers should endeavour to carry out an empirical study on health and well being; its importance for national development.
- Book writers and course developers should incorporate health and well being into psychology curriculum.
- Government should enact a law that will make it imperative for the indigent and the lower cadre in Nigeria to have free compulsory access to health care services, since they are the most vulnerable to health challenges.

### Conclusion

Health and well-being are not just the absence of disease or illness. It is a person's physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual health factors. These concepts are strongly linked to happiness and life satisfaction.

From the highlights in the study, the importance of the positive effect of health and wellbeing, if fully implemented to the letter, cannot be overemphasized. It will definitely enhance longevity. On the other hand, if these points raised here as remedies to long life are taking for granted, the reverse will be the case.

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