Critical Issues in Aging

This is a partial list of issues important to the elderly. It could be used to select possible topics for group projects or individual papers. Possible advocacy issues are identified with (*). To identify additional advocacy issues or to expand on these, locate advocacy web sites.

- death and dying:
    - anticipating your own death.
    - death of a spouse or child.
    - death of elderly parents.
- discrimination against the elderly.
- elder abuse.
- family relationships: strengthening vs. deterioration.
- financial issues in aging.
- “happiness” and “quality of life” as they relate to aging.

* health care.
    - health care financing.
    - health care availability.
    - health care discrimination against elderly (e.g. assumption of loss as normal or expected).
    - recent political issue: prescription drug coverage.

* housing and living arrangements for the elderly.
* legal aid.

- loneliness.

* medical facilities and support.

- personality changes in the elderly.
- physiological bases of aging and physiological changes with aging.

* poverty.

- purpose, meaning, and leaving a legacy: important or not?
- relationships: guidelines for successful relationships.
- relationships: how they change with aging.
- sex roles and how they change with aging.

* stereotypes about aging; attitudes about aging. Examine:
    - books.
    - magazines.
    - TV.
    - movies.
    - changes over time.
    - differences between cultures.

- substance abuse: alcoholism, drug abuse, prescription drug misuse.
- "wisdom": what is it, and how does it increase or decrease with aging.
- depression.
- right to die issues.
- recreation for the elderly.
- religion in the elderly. Do people turn to religion as they get older?
- retirement.
- sex and sexuality:
    - changes in sex drive.
    - physical sexuality vs. emotional closeness.
    - changes in males vs. females.

* Social Security system: will system go bankrupt?

- specific diseases: Alzheimer’s disease; Parkinson’s disease; etc.
- stroke and its after-effects.
- transportation.