

A New Typology of Functionality and Health of the Elderly in Mexico

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The Mexican Health and Aging Survey 2001 allows new concepts and estimates of health status, functionality and related risk factors for the elderly. The survey has data from around 15,000 individual 50 years old and over. Besides a nation wide statistical representation of health and socio-economic characteristics of the elderly, information is valid by sex, by age groups and by urban and less urban settings. A combination of categories in these three variables produces a detailed analysis describing the elderly population in regard to health and well-being and also other topics.

Indicators of health status consider two approaches: diagnosis and self-reporting. In the first aspect the survey asks if a health professional has pointed out the presence of any of the following chronic diseases: hypertension, diabetes, arthritis, pulmonary diseases, hearth diseases, cerebral stroke or cancer. A second characteristic is how individuals regard themselves in relation to overall health conditions and well-being. Four rankings were considered: very good, good, regular and bad.

Functionality is evaluated by the capability to perform without trouble ADL (walking, bathing, getting in and out of bed, use of toilet) and IADL (fix a warm meal, shopping, handle money, take medicines). Five categories were established.

- **Disability free.** People that do not have problems with any of the ADL and IADL, enjoying full functionality and independence.
- **Slight disabilities.** Some difficulties restricted to IADL.
- **Moderate disability.** There are minor difficulties with ADL
- **High disability.** Problems with at least one ADL and at least one IADL. People with difficulties in all ADL and IADL are excluded.
- **Severe disability.** Problems with all ADL and IADL.

Risk factors are tobacco smoking, alcohol drinking and lack of regular exercise. Degrees of risk were established as:

- **Low risk.** People that do not smoke, do not have alcohol consumption and are physically active.
- **High risk.** No physical activity and high use of tobacco or alcohol; high consumption of both tobacco and alcohol regardless of physical activity.
- **Medium risk.** Any other situation that do not fall in the low or high risk definitions.

Combinations of all these indicators were used to create four aging categories.

Ideal aging: These are the persons that are fully able to perform all ADL and IADL. No chronic disease have been detected on them. They consider their health as very good or good, do not have risky health behavior and practice regular exercise.

Active aging: People in this group have been diagnosed with chronic diseases, they might experience slight disability, but they remind active considering themselves in a very good or good state of health. Their life-style has low risk factors.

Usual aging: People that belong to this group have some chronic ailment, think to have a regular state of health, have a moderate disability and their risk factors of low and never above average.

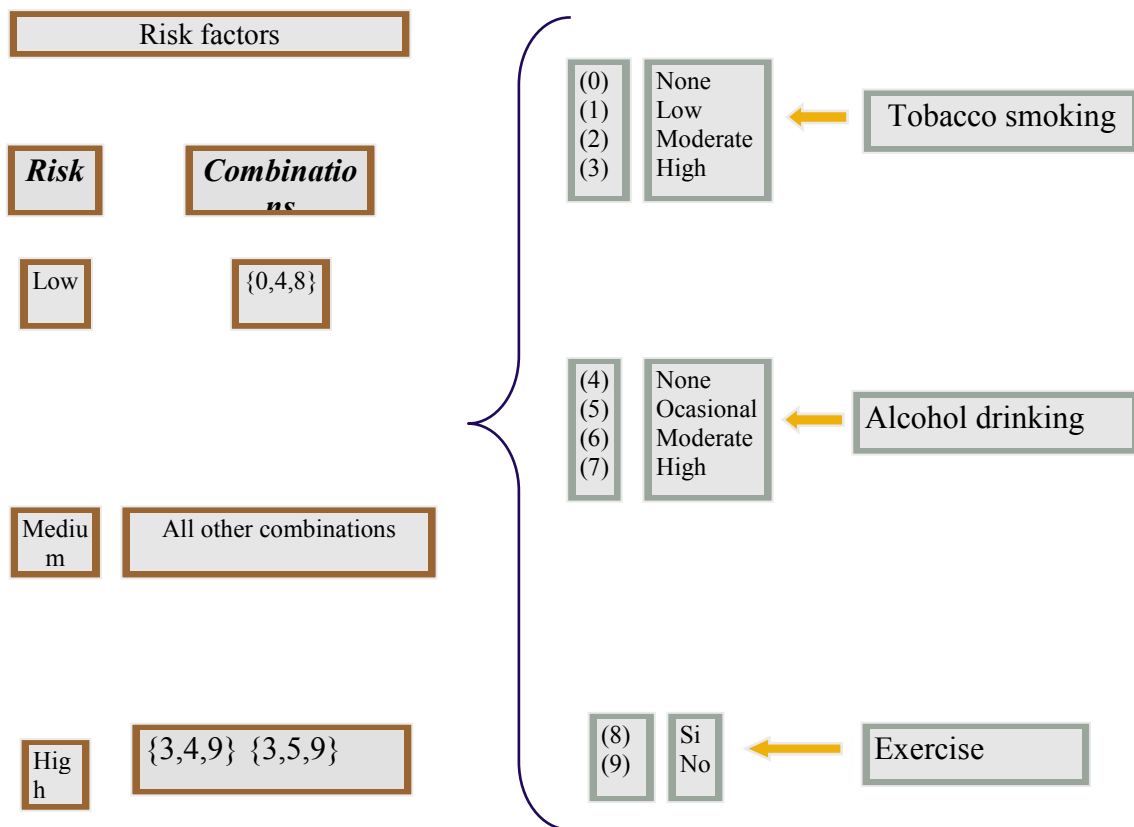
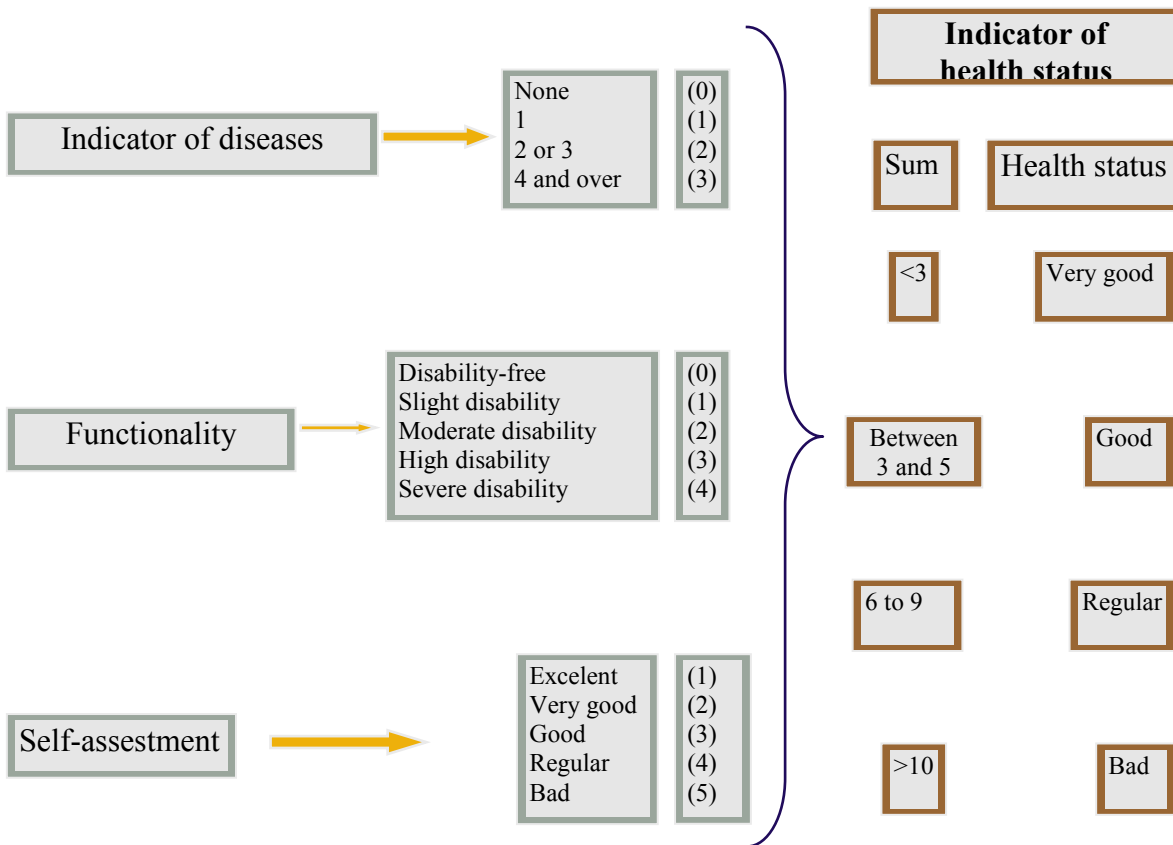
Pathological aging: This group displays a bad state of health because of the presence of chronic diseases, their self-report is bad, and their functionality is severely affected. At this point risk factors are irrelevant. This group is essentially composed by people heavily depending on others.

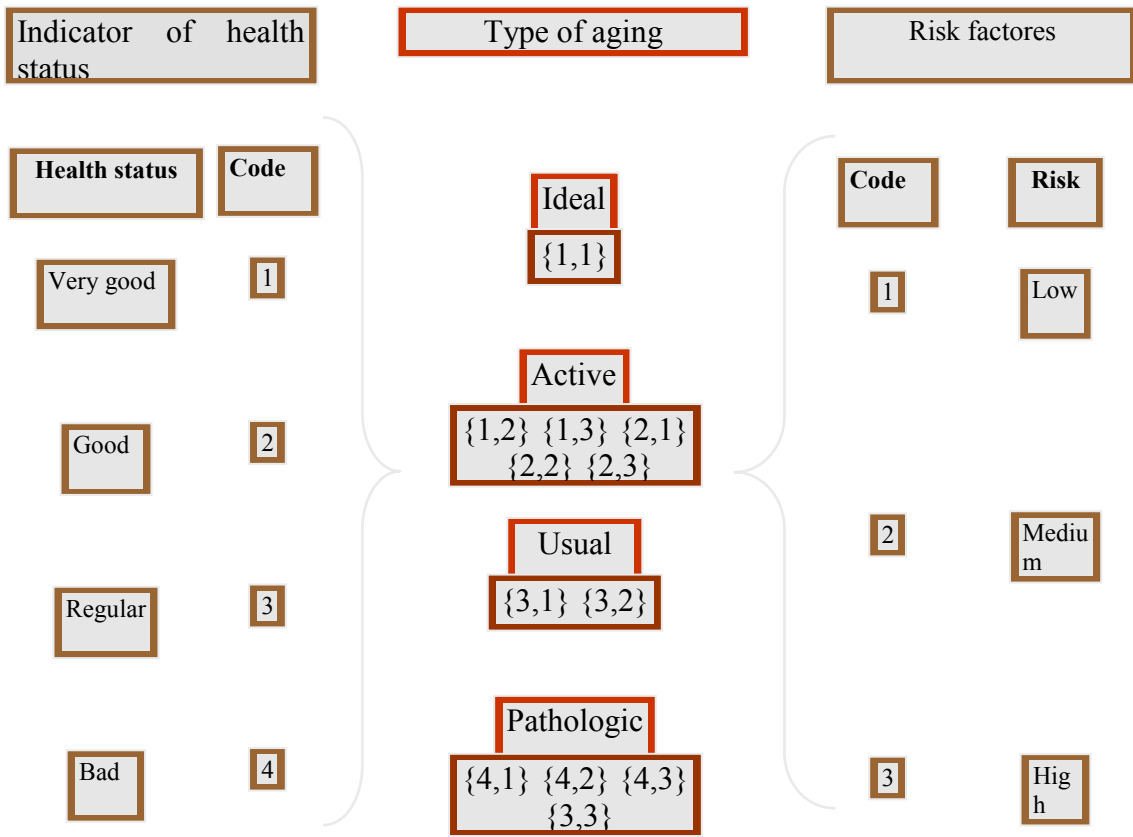
Summaries of statistical procedures and results are presented in the attached tables and diagrams. Figures clearly show that profiles and tempo of health deterioration and disabilities are due in the first place by aging in terms of years that have been lived, then by sex and the less impacting factor is the place of residence.

Main indicators for a typology of the population 50+ in Mexico, 2001

Indicator	Total	Men	Women	Less urban	Urban	50-64	65-74	75+
No chronic diseases	43.4	52.3	35.9	44.7	41.8	47.6	36.5	34.9
Disability free	89.2	91.9	87.0	89.8	88.7	93.4	87.5	72.1
Regular and bad self-reported health	63.8	58.1	68.6	68.5	58.4	60.5	67.8	72.5
Regular and bad health status	28.4	22.3	33.4	29.1	27.6	23.0	33.9	44.4
No smoking	83.3	73.9	91.1	86.1	80.0	81.5	84.7	89.0
No alcohol drinking	69.4	52.8	83.2	73.4	64.8	64.9	74.9	80.8
Physical activity	32.5	43.3	23.3	38.6	25.5	36.5	28.4	20.0
Low risk behavior	16.9	16.6	17.2	21.5	11.8	17.9	16.9	12.4
Ideal aging	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.8	0.8	0.6	0.3
Active aging	71.0	77.0	65.9	70.3	71.7	76.3	65.5	55.3
Usual aging	26.8	20.7	32.0	27.5	26.0	21.8	31.9	41.9
Patological aging	1.5	1.7	1.4	1.5	1.5	1.2	2.0	2.5

Data source: MHAS, 2001.





Sex	Age	Type of aging			
		Ideal	Active	Usual	Pathological
Less urban residence					
Men	50 - 64	0.6	83.4	15.3	0.6
	65 - 74	0.3	70.2	25.9	3.5
	75 +	0.0	59.5	38.3	2.2
	Total	0.5	76.0	21.9	1.6
Women	50 - 64	0.6	71.3	26.6	1.5
	65 - 74	0.8	57.2	41.1	0.8
	75 +	0.7	50.4	46.5	2.5
	Total	0.7	65.3	32.5	1.5
Urban residence					
Men	50 - 64	1.0	81.9	15.4	1.7
	65 - 74	1.1	73.9	23.5	1.5
	75 +	0.2	66.5	30.6	2.6
	Total	0.9	78.2	19.1	1.7
Women	50 - 64	0.8	71.3	27.0	0.9
	65 - 74	0.3	61.5	36.3	2.0
	75 +	0.2	46.7	50.1	3.0
	Total	0.6	66.6	31.4	1.4

Data source: MHAS, 2001.