

Abstract

Age differences in emotional expressivity and its effect on psychological well being was investigated. 194 Hong Kong Chinese aged from 18 to 85, reported their emotional expressivity and psychological well being. Results indicated that middle-aged adults were significantly more emotionally expressive than young and old adults in terms of impulse strength and external emotional control. Among old adults, but not young or middle-aged adults, being emotionally expressive was correlated to their psychological well being. Being more emotionally expressive contributed to well being by reducing negative affect, but also resulted in detrimental effects on well being by increasing agitation and dissatisfaction. The results were explained in terms of developmental process of emotional regulation across adulthood and contextual influences on expressivity.