

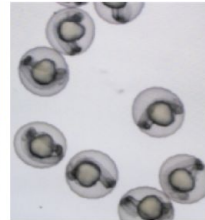
Safety for Older Adults

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UAB Geriatrics

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UAB MEDICINE



Disclosures

No funding

No conflicts of interest

Outline

Normal Aging

Geriatric Syndromes

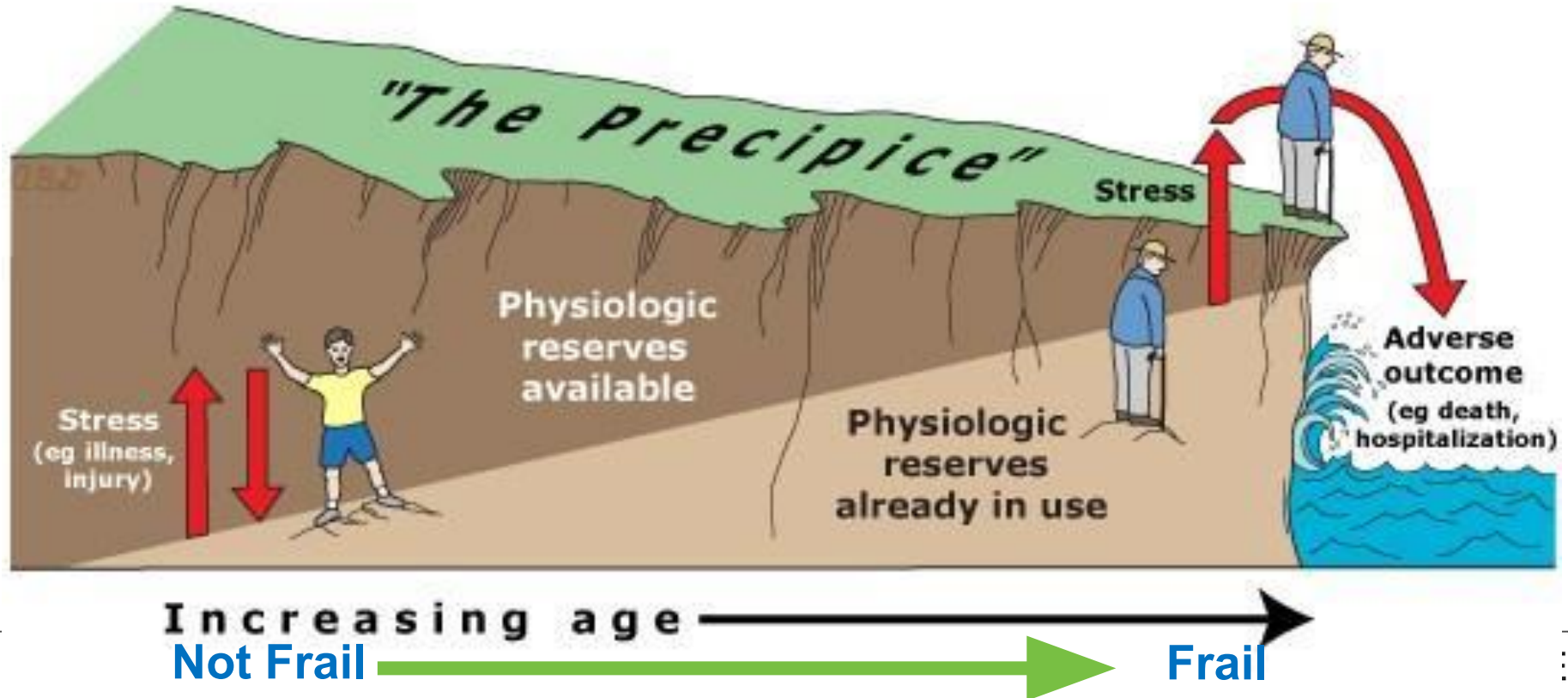
Specific safety issues to consider

- Driving
- Kitchen
- Home oxygen
- Medication
- Firearms
- Personal finance
- Falls





Homeostenosis



Physiologic changes with aging

Mouth- xerostomia, wearing of enamel, decreased dentin, pulp sensitivity

Stomach- increased sensitivity, slowed healing, decreased motility

Kidneys- decreased filtration function

Cardiovascular- calcification in heart, decreased heart rate variability, stiffening of heart and arteries

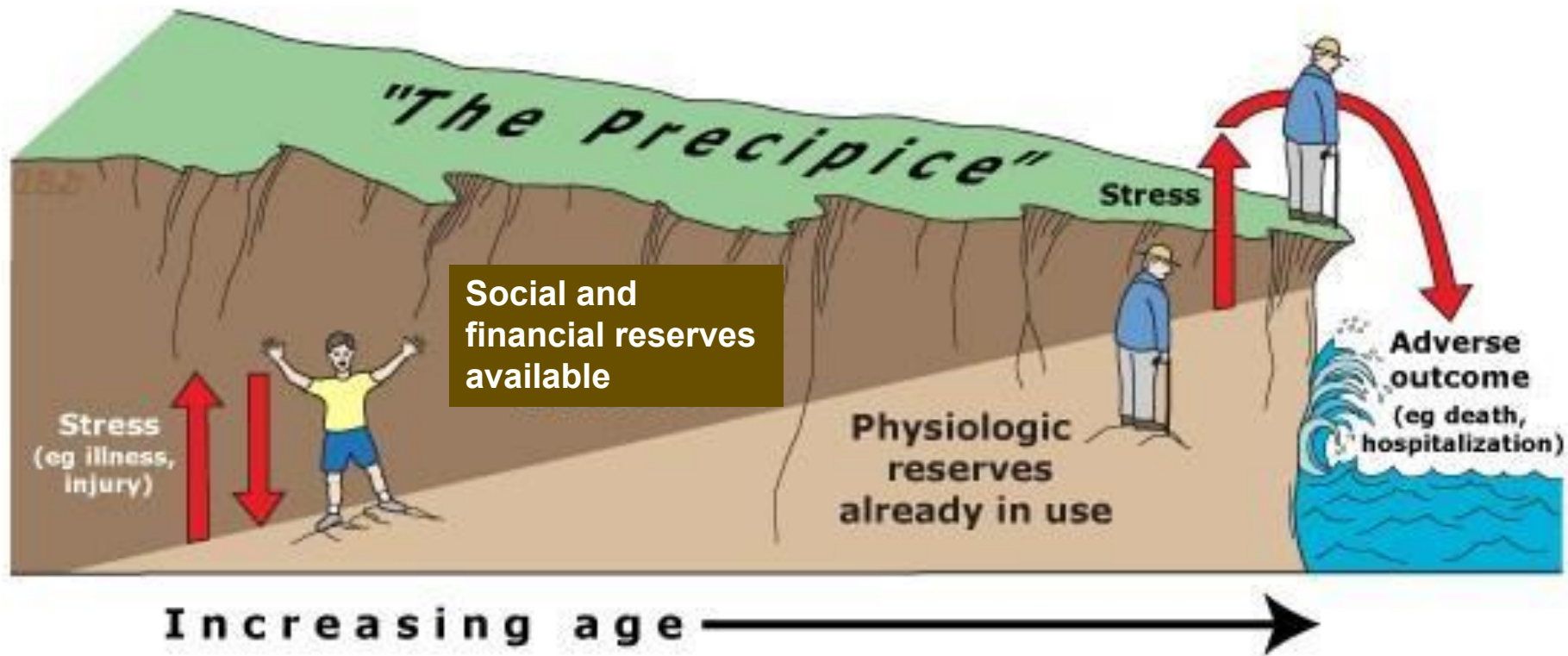
Lungs- decreased surface area for gas exchange

GU- shortened urethra in women, prostatic hyperplasia

Musculoskeletal- decreased muscle mass (sarcopenia), decreased bone mass

Brain- loss of neurons

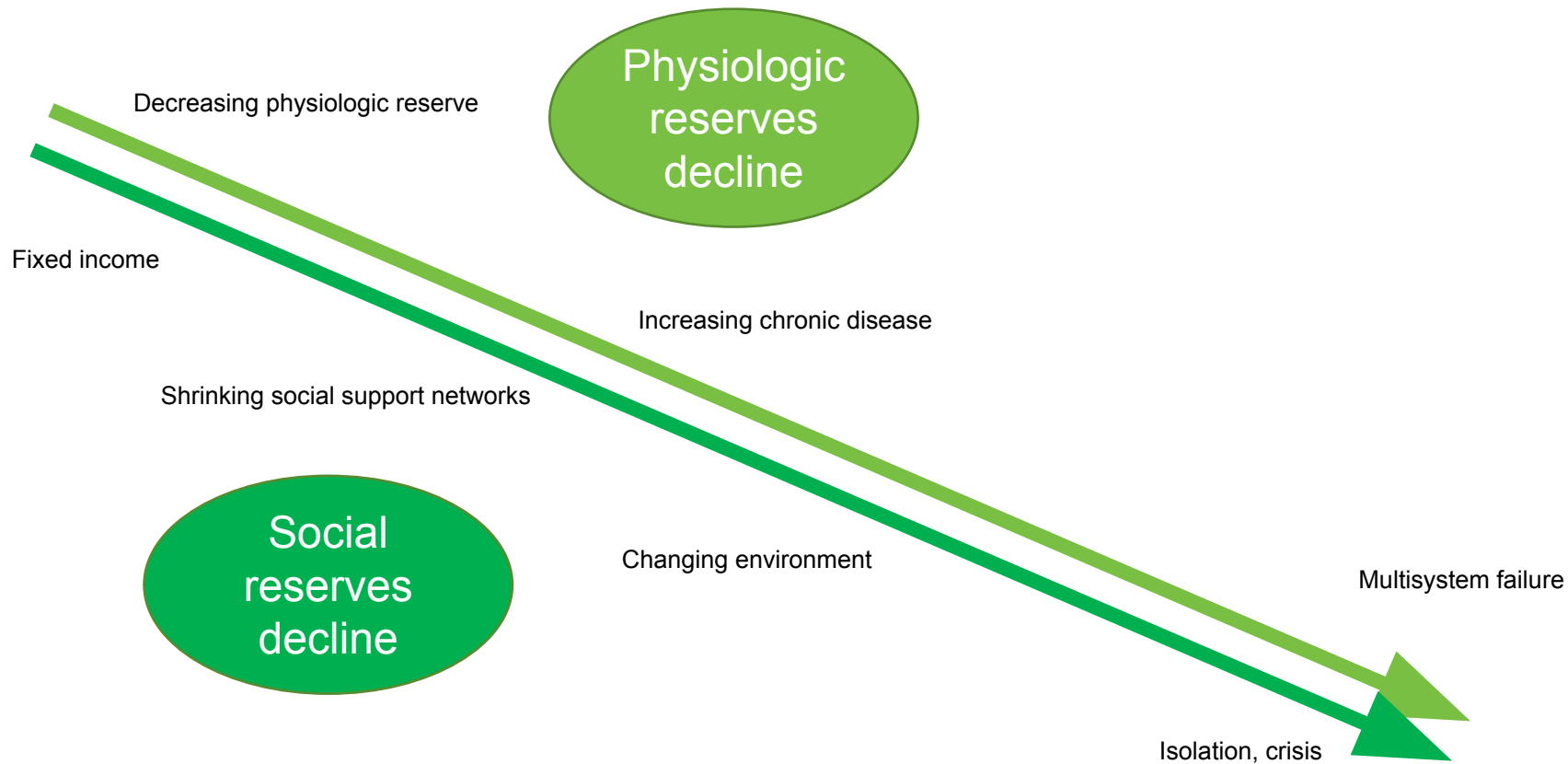
Skin- thinning, decreased elasticity



Not Frail



Frail MEDICINE



Geriatric Syndromes

Dementia

Delirium

Polypharmacy

Depression

Frailty

Sarcopenia

Insomnia

Incontinence

Mobility issues

Vision impairment

Hearing impairment

In the US, among adults 65 and older:

Dementia- 10%

Delirium- 23% of older inpatients

Falls- 27.5%, 10.2% with a fall-related injury

Hearing loss- 25% 65-74, 50% 75 and older have disabling hearing loss

Vision impairment- 4% for age 65-69, 20.7% for 85 and older

Driving



Consider driving safety in patients with:

- Low vision
- Impaired cognition
- Neck and limb mobility issues

Ask: accidents, tickets

Driving assessment

Contact DMV if needed

Risk mitigation

- Optimize conditions
- Local, familiar routes only

Kitchen



Home Oxygen



- Needs electricity!
 - Tripping on tubing
 - Smoking
 - Vaseline
-
- **Keep 6 feet away from:**
 - toys with electric motors
 - space heaters, wood stoves or fireplaces, candles
 - electric blankets, hair dryers, electric toothbrushes and razors

Medications

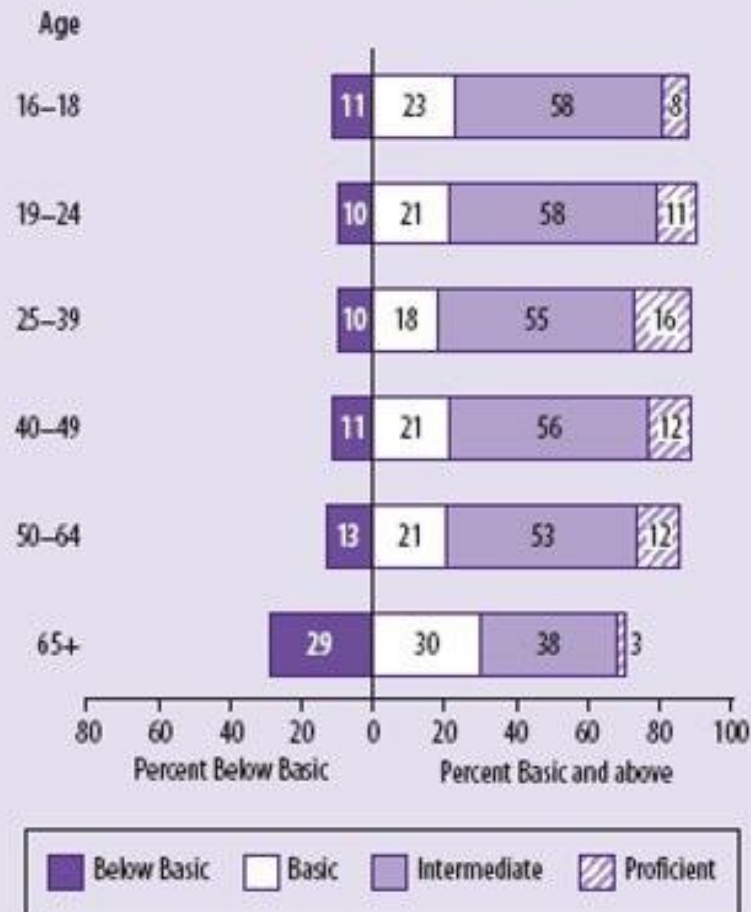
Low health literacy
Dementia
Manual dexterity
Visual impairment



Medications

Low health literacy
Dementia
Manual dexterity
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Figure 2-7. Percentage of adults in each health literacy level, by age: 2003



Medications

Low health literacy
Dementia
Manual dexterity
Visual impairment



Medications

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NORMAL VISION



Dull or yellow vision from cataracts.



Blurry or dim vision is a symptom of cataracts.



Distortion or ghost images from cataracts.



Firearms

A photograph of two people, an older woman and a man, seen from behind as they stand in a grassy field. The woman on the left has short, curly grey hair and is wearing a tan vest over a patterned shirt. The man on the right is wearing a grey flat cap, sunglasses, and a green vest over a plaid shirt. Both are holding long-barreled firearms, likely shotguns, which are pointed upwards. The background shows a vast, open landscape under a clear blue sky.

- Always discuss safe storage practices

- 32.4% of all firearm deaths are older adults (over 50)
 - 82% suicide
 - 16% homicide
- High risk patients:
 - Mental health issues
 - Dementia
 - Vision impairment

Personal Finance

Bill paying

Managing assets

Excessive spending

Exploitation



Falls



Outpatient

- Home health occupational therapy can do home safety evaluation
- Physical therapy
- Assistive devices

Inpatient

- Restraints (mechanical and pharmacologic) are not helpful
- Low beds, sitters

Summary



Thank you!

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