

Figure 1. The functional capacity of an organ or system can be described as its ability to deliver basic requirements. It will vary across the lifespan and decline with age. Factors operating in earlier life-stages may determine whether functional capacity remains adequate in older people. Achieving a higher peak functional capacity or having slower rate of decline (A), will preserve health for longer than for a lower peak functional capacity or having a faster rate of decline (B).

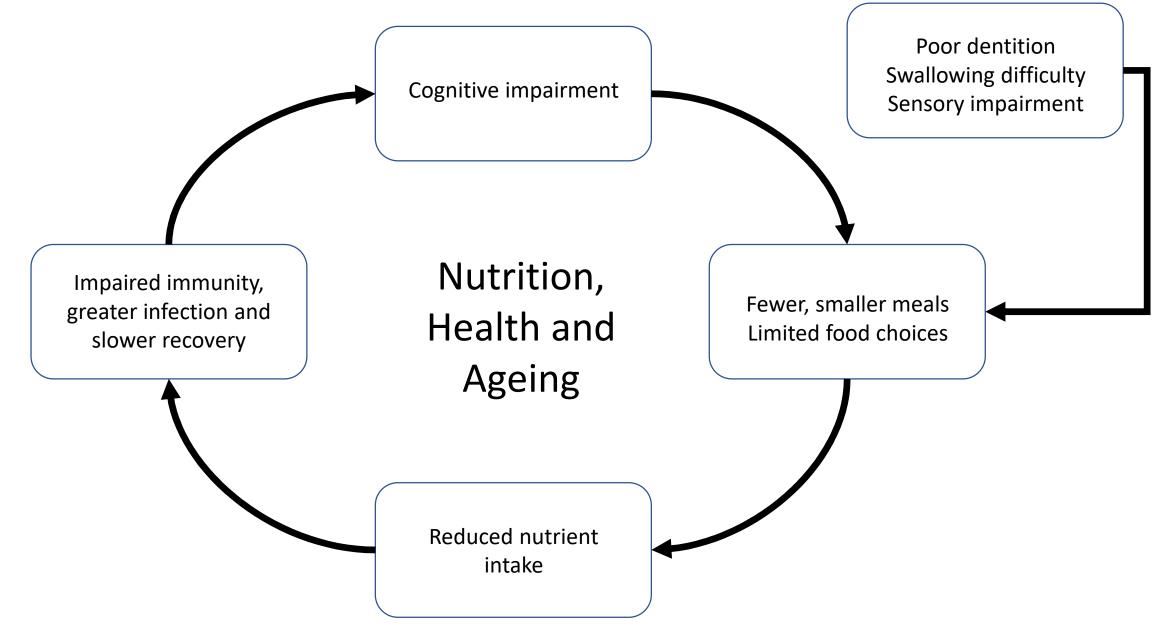


Figure 2. In elderly people, declining function in some physiological systems which impact on food choice and intake can establish a vicious cycle promoting more rapid decline.

Figure 3. The state of health at any stage of life is a product of the cumulative factors experienced across the lifespan. Complex interactions of lifestyle and current environment with genetic and epigenetic factors determine physiological and metabolic functions.

