Ageism is no Joke: The Health Implications of Ageism: Ageism is Strange, When You’re a Stranger

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Overview

- Health Implications of Ageism
- Health Impact of Ageist Assumptions in Service Delivery
- The Role of Anti-Aging
The Health Impacts of Ageism

- *World Health Organization: Global Report on Ageism*

- “Ageismharmseveryone—oldandyoung. But often,itis sos widespread and accepted—in our attitudes and in policies, laws and institutions—that wedono even recognizeits detrimental effect on our dignity and rights said Michelle Bachelet, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. “We need to fight ageism head-on, as adeep-rooted human rights violation.”
Strategies to Combat Ageism

1. Policy and Law
2. Educational Interventions
3. Intergenerational Contact
World Health Organization
Recommendations for Action

1. Invest in evidence-based strategies to prevent and tackle ageism
2. Improve data and research to gain a better understanding of ageism and how to reduce it
3. Build a movement to change the narrative around age and ageing
Ageism Impact on Costs and Health

• What is the cost of ageism on health conditions for persons over the age of 60?
• Study shows: $63 billion spent on health care for the eight most-expensive health conditions
  – Cardiovascular Disease
  – Chronic Respiratory Disease
  – Injuries
  – Diabetes Mellitus
  – Mental Disorders
  – Non-communicable Disease
  – Treatment of Smoking

(Levy, Slade, Chang, Kannoth, & Wang, 2018)
Ageism Predictors

- There are three discrete ageism predictors:
  - Age discrimination: defined as detrimental treatment of older persons.
  - Negative age stereotypes: defined as the negative beliefs of older persons about older people in general.
  - Negative self-perceptions of aging: defined as the negative beliefs of older persons about their own aging.

(Levy, Slade, Chang, Kannoth, & Wang, 2018)
Ageism Continued..

• Research identifies the economic cost that ageism imposes on health.

• The results suggest that a reduction of ageism would not have a monetary benefit for society, but also have a health benefit for older adults.

• Health Impact of Ageist Assumptions in Service Delivery

• Statements such as “you’re 75 years old, what do you expect?” When presenting physical symptoms

• Speaking over the older adult and only addressing their caregiver

• Assumptions of frailty
Anti-Aging Medicine

- At this point “we cannot reverse, slow, or stop the aging process
- The marketing at its core is ageist
- Age is not a condition that needs to be cured
Recommendations

• Anti-Ageism Training for Service Providers
• Examination of policies dealing with older adults
• Avoidance of ageist or ablest language in our materials
• Understand that Aging and Ageism are examples of social determinants of health
Conclusion

- Research
- Does ageism impact the choice of working with older adults?
Sources
