

Ageism: Lack of Societal Support to Grow Old

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Abstract

Ageism is a process of systematic stereotyping and discrimination against old people because they are old. In various cultures, once a person is characterized as elderly the non elderly are likely to apply a host of negative stereotypes to the aged. Such practices include both negative feelings towards the elderly and also discriminatory behavior directed to them. The term ageism was coined by Robert Neil Butler, Butler highlighted three elements in Ageism: Prejudice against ageing and elderly, Discrimination against the elderly, Policies and practices that perpetuate and strengthen the stereotypes of the aged. Societal stereotypes for aging marginalize seniors, treat them with disrespect, make them feel unwelcome and otherwise generalize as if they were all the same. This article aims to highlight the concept of ageism, its causes and its impact on the elderly and the health care systems. On an in depth review of literature it was found that ageism contributes towards a major deterioration in elderly perception about themselves and psychological well being. Ageism also affects the attitude of elderly towards health care systems in a negative way. In conclusion, more awareness and researches are needed understand the sensitivity of ageism.

Keywords: Ageism, Old Age, Elderly, Health Care Systems.

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