

Perspective

A short note on ageism and its effect on human health

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ABOUT THE STUDY

Prejudice or discrimination against people based on their age is known as ageism. It usually affects older people, although it can also affect young people. Ageism has been linked to premature death and has a detrimental influence on physical and mental health. Ageism is a systematic type of oppression, but unlike other inequities like racism, sexism, and ableism, it may affect everyone. Although it is universal, people do not take ageism as seriously as other forms of inequity.

Types of ageism

Ageism can be classified in a variety of ways.

- Institutional ageism, which happens when an institution promotes ageism by its acts and policies, is one example of where ageism occurs.
- Interpersonal ageism is a form of age discrimination that happens in social situations.
- Internalized ageism occurs when a person internalizes ageist attitudes and applies them to oneself.

Ageism varies depending on the context. Hostile ageism, for example, is defined by overtly confrontational ideas about age, such as the assumption that teens are violent or dangerous. Benevolent ageism, on the other hand, is when someone has condescending ideas about others their age, such as thinking older adults are childlike and require assistance with fundamental tasks.

Another method to classify ageism is whether or not the individual is aware of it. This is referred to as explicit ageism if they are. Implicit ageism occurs when people are unaware of it. For example, implicit ageism occurs when a clinician unintentionally treats older and younger patients differently. Ageism Comes itself in a variety of ways such as:

- Refusing to hire people over or under a certain age limit

- Asking for someone's age during a job interview when it is irrelevant to the job

- Enacting policies that unfairly favour one age group over another

- Viewing old people as out of touch, less productive, or stuck in their ways

- Viewing young people as unskilled, irresponsible, or untrustworthy

In personal relationships, some examples include:

- Treating family members as if they are invisible, dumb, or expendable because of their age

- Making ageist jokes that indicate someone is less valued or deserving of respect because of their age

- Expressing derogatory assumptions about a certain generation

- Ignoring a person's concerns or preferences because of their age

- Using someone's age for personal advantage, such as making money

- Using someone's age as an excuse to manipulate, deceive, or control them

Ageism in healthcare

Ageism is widespread in the medical field all around the world. It has an impact on every element of healthcare, including diagnosis and prognosis. It has an impact on healthcare policies as well as workplace culture. Infantilizing patients is a typical example of benign ageism in healthcare. Inaccurate ageing perceptions, less care, attention, and treatment, and worse health levels.

How ageism affects one's health

Individuals are not only affected by ageism. It has far-reaching implications. They include:

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Higher rates of illness: As individuals become older, ageism lowers their physical and mental health, increasing their care demands and lowering their quality of life. It's also linked to risky habits like smoking, drinking, and eating an unhealthy diet.

Increased healthcare spending: According to the World Health Organization, the United States spends billions of dollars each year addressing health disorders caused by ageism.

Poverty: Poverty is exacerbated by higher healthcare expenditures and a lack of health insurance. This is especially challenging for retirees, those who have lost a partner or spouse, or those who are unable to work due to disability or disease. Poverty also has a negative impact on one's health, creating a vicious cycle.

Lower life expectancy: Ageism is associated to an earlier mortality, resulting in a 7.5 year reduction in average life expectancy.