AGEISM

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TODAY’S PRESENTATION

1. What is “Ageism”?
2. Why is Ageism so Pervasive and Prevalent?
3. Manifestations & Consequences of Ageism
4. What can we do better?

STEREOTYPES

PREJUDICE

DISCRIMINATION

WHY AGEISM?

Nelson, 2005

Ayalon, 2013

31.111

285

1,185

WHY AGEISM?

17.3%

4.9%

34.5%

END OF PRESENTATION

ETIOLOGY

MACRO

Policies & Government

MESO

Physical, Socio-cultural, & community Environments

MICRO

Individual Factors

Incompetent, weak, a burden to society

Nelson, 2005

Ayalon, 2013

24.9%

34.5

17.3%

Kind, warm, wise

Hire for a job

Sorry for this person, repelled

Attracted, interested

Do not sit next to this person in a restaurant

Modernization theory

Cowgill, 1986

Social segregation

Hagestad & Uhlenberg, 2005

Terror management

Greenberg et al., 1983

MACRO

Policies & Government

MESO

Physical, Socio-cultural, & community Environments

MICRO

Individual Factors

Macrogenesis, duality theory, 1960

Age-related inequalities, Hooykaas, 2005

Senior management, International, 2005

END OF PRESENTATION
THE MANIFESTATION OF AGEISM

- The macro-level
- The legal-judicial system
- The spatial environment
- The health care system
- The workforce
- The media
- Internalized age stereotypes

“Without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.”

Seven decades later, age is still not an explicit part of a UN declaration.

“confronting demographic change” (European Commission 2009),
“dramatic changes in the age structure in the EU” (European Commission—Economic and Financial Affairs 2015, p. 1).

Old age as a BURDEN

Ben-Noon & Ayalon, 2017, The Gerontologist

IS THIS BEHAVIOR VIOLENT?

Yet more likely to choose a legal intervention for the older woman

Differences in prognosis and diagnosis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>young</th>
<th>old</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Success of treatment</td>
<td>Diagnosis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance Anxiety</td>
<td>Erectile Dysfunction</td>
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Think of a witch...

UNDER 40 WELCOME
OVER 40 DO NOT ENTER

GETTING OLDER?

KIDS PAINT
AN OLDER PERSON AND A YOUNGER PERSON

OLDER ADULTS SAY ABOUT THEMSELVES

...They were slow and got in my way...They couldn't tell a story straight...

You are a bit of a nuisance to everyone. You get that attitude a lot...

...not of economic value, who no longer contribute, and therefore are of no value. That seems to be how people are being measured now...


Nicole Kidman
Susan Sarandon
Goldie Hawn
Michael Douglas
Robert De Niro
Robert Redford
THE LITTLE BOY AND THE OLD MAN
by Shel Silverstein

Said the little boy, "Sometimes I drop my spoon."
Said the old man, "I do that too."
The little boy whispered, "I wet my pants."
"I do that too," laughed the little old man.
Said the little boy, "I often cry."
The old man nodded, "So do I."
"But worst of all," said the boy, "It seems grown-ups don't pay attention to me."
And he felt the warmth of a wrinkled old hand.
"I know what you mean," said the little old man.

What we should do next:
- Age is just a number
- The way we talk about old age makes a difference
- Explicit prohibition of age discrimination
- Interventions to reduce ageism
- Join the global campaign to combat ageism
How ageism affects our human rights in older age

Nena Georgantzi
AGE Platform Europe
NUIG
30th October 2018
All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights

Article 1
Universal Declaration of Human Rights
“Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration without distinction of any kind such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status”
Equality in practice: Legitimate difference or discrimination?
Equality in practice
Ageism

law

practice
“Although the Universal Declaration on Human Rights proclaims that all human beings are born free and equal, it is evident that the enjoyment of all human rights diminishes with age, owing to the negative notion that older persons are somehow less productive, less valuable to society and a burden to the economy and to younger generations.”

UN Open-ended Working Group on Ageing, 2017
HOW AGEISM AFFECTS HUMAN RIGHTS

Step 1
Accepting different standards of treatment
Unlike other forms of discrimination, ageism is socially accepted and usually unchallenged, because of the subconscious internalisation of ageist prejudices.

UN Independent Expert on the Enjoyment of all Human Rights by Older Persons
Mandatory retirement ages accepted across EU on assumption that capacity to work diminishes with age.
‘If you have a stroke before the age of 60 you have access to a relatively good system, but beyond that age – at best - you are given a few euros and left to your own devices’
Law, policy and practice perpetuate the view that older people are less capable, less worthy of recognition or value as human beings or as members of society → denial of rights more acceptable than for other groups.
HOW AGEISM AFFECTS HUMAN RIGHTS
Step 2
Failing to correct the injustice
Who minds the gap?
Ageism not seen as harmful

• Absence of age discrimination laws
• Exceptions
• Lack of scrutiny about age limits in law and unfair treatment in practice → ex. training
• Self ageism → not claiming rights
• Lack of information and support
• Biased decisions by courts
WHAT NEXT?
It is in fact the only vulnerable population (i.e. elderly) that does not have a comprehensive and/or binding international instrument addressing their rights specifically.

Rodriguez-Pinzon and Martin, 2003
What can a new UN Convention do?

- Shift the focus from ‘age discrimination is objectively justified’ to ‘age discrimination is unacceptable as it serves to marginalise and diminish older people’
- Recognize barriers and change needed
- Explicitly prohibit age discrimination in all areas of life
- Create an obligation for governments to work towards eliminating age discrimination
1 OCTOBER - 10 DECEMBER
#AgeingEqual

• Raise more awareness of the magnitude and gravity of ageism than ever before
• Establish a lasting community and platform for action against ageism
• Initiate new collaborations around ageing and ageism
• Support the UN Campaign celebrating the 70th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights #StandUp4HumanRights
For more information: www.ageing-equal.org
THANK YOU!

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GLOBAL CAMPAIGN TO COMBAT AGEISM

Dr Vânia de la Fuente-Núñez
“to develop in cooperation with other partners, a global campaign to combat ageism in order to add value to local initiatives, achieve the ultimate goal of enhancing the day-to-day experience of older people and optimize policy responses”

WHO gets involved

194 countries call for the development of a Global Campaign to Combat Ageism
VISION
A world for ALL ages

GOAL
Change the way we think, feel and act towards age and ageing
Data & Evidence
Develop the evidence base for action

Global Coalition
Build a coalition to drive change

Awareness
Inform, advocate and change the representation and discourse around age & ageing

Platform for action
Optimize policy responses & improve lives

Global Campaign to Combat Ageism
4 areas of work
DATA & EVIDENCE

GLOBAL CAMPAIGN TO COMBAT AGEISM
Global Report on Ageism

Data & Evidence

- Theory of Change
- 1 study of the prevalence of ageism (World Values Survey)
- Review of country reports
- 4 systematic reviews (determinants, consequences, metrics and what works)
- Lived experiences (HelpAge, Age Platform)
- Scoping review on ageism and younger people
Global Coalition

• Core group
• Secretariat
• Stakeholder mapping [https://tinyurl.com/ycm6kuzf](https://tinyurl.com/ycm6kuzf)
• Donor mapping
• Draft stakeholder guidelines for partners and supporters
• UN collaborations
AWARENESS

GLOBAL CAMPAIGN TO COMBAT AGEISM
Review of Campaigns:
- 3 national/ regional campaigns: Get old (Pfizer); Disrupt Ageing (AARP); Take a Stand Against Ageism (HelpAge International)
- 6 local city/ community campaigns: Australia, Canada (Portland and Quebec), Italy, Spain, United States of America

Website http://www.who.int/ageing/commit-action/en/

Master Class & other events

Hashtags

Language Guide

Promoting others efforts (Webinar, Tweets) and raising awareness about our own work

# AWorld4AllAges
# LeaveNoAgeBehind
# EveryAgeCounts
PLATFORM FOR ACTION

GLOBAL CAMPAIGN TO COMBAT AGEISM
Platform for action

• Survey on country needs
• Designing a Platform
• Database of good practices
• Communication toolkit
• **Scale** to measure ageism
How it all comes together

- **Global Strategy & Action Plan**
  Recognizing the issue

- **Building an evidence base**
  Research on ageism

- **Stakeholder mapping**
  Understanding who is working on ageism and what they’re doing

- **Global Report on Ageism**
  Call for action in an evidence-based framework

- **Global coalition**
  Partners and supporters of the campaign set out to act

- **Platform for action**
  Tools and messages available for use

- **New legislation & policy?**
- **Training curriculums?**
- **National campaigns?**
- **Intergenerational activities?**
A WORLD 4 ALL AGES

Dr Vânia de la Fuente-Núñez

http://www.who.int/ageing/en/

#AWorld4AllAges