

Ageism in Health Care



WHAT IS AGEISM?

● AGEISM

Ageism involves stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination of people based on their age. Ageist thoughts, attitudes and behaviours can be targeted towards oneself or others and can be directed towards an individual or group at any age.

● TYPES OF AGEISM

- **Structural** (systemic / cultural) ageism refers to ways society fosters age discrimination. This can include media messages, humour, beauty industry standards & ageist commentary.
- **Institutional** (organizational) ageism is evidenced in discriminatory policies or practices implemented at the organizational or governmental level.
- **Interpersonal** ageism refers to discriminatory behaviours or interactions between individuals.
- **Individual** (self-directed) ageism occurs when an individual internalizes ageist stereotypes to an extent that it negatively affects the individual's health and well being

GLOBAL STATISTICS

- More than 1 in 2 people worldwide admit to being ageist
- 1 in 3 people in Europe admit to having been a target of ageism
- According to the WHO, ageism costs society billions of dollars
- In a global systematic review of the impacts of ageism, 96% of studies identified that ageism was associated with worse health outcomes
- Approximately 6.33 million cases of depression are associated with ageism

WHO, 2021

AGEISM'S IMPACT ON HEALTH

Ageism has the potential to impact our physical and mental health as we age.

PHYSICAL	MENTAL
Earlier death Risky health behaviours Increased risk of STD's Adverse Drug Events	Poor self concept Depression Anxiety Reduces opportunity for flourishing

● ACTION

There are many ways individuals and organizations can combat ageism in the health care setting.



Policies & Practices - create policies and practices that address age discrimination directed towards any age.

- Examples include hiring policies; evaluate current practices that reinforce age-based attitudes / approaches; ensure individualized care



Education - Implement educational interventions to teach people about ageism at all levels of education.

- Examples include mandatory gerontology courses for health-related programs; educate self and others about age related stereotypes; create public health campaigns related to aging



Intergenerational Contact - Increasing intergenerational contact between generations.

- Examples include creating opportunities for health care providers to have exposure to patients with a variety of physical, cognitive and functional capabilities