

Sociodemographic differences in attitudes of elderly towards aging

Sociodemografske razlike u stavovima starijih osoba prema starenju

Želimir Bertić¹, Mirjana Telebuh²

¹ Faculty of Health Study, University of Rijeka, Croatia

² University of Applied Health Sciences Zagreb, Croatia
Bertic.z@gmail.com

Introduction and objective: In modern developed societies, there are still stereotypes towards aging that are often based on insufficient knowledge and experience in relationships with the elderly. Unlike some other stigmatized groups, elderly people often accept negative stereotypes, which will ultimately affect their attitude towards aging. With the aim of better understanding the specifics of aging, with this research we wanted to investigate whether there is a difference in attitudes towards aging among elderly based on their sociodemographic characteristics (gender, marital status, place of residence, level of education).

Methods: The survey was conducted using a survey method in the spring of 2019. on a sample of 148 respondents with an average age of 74.56 years (from 66 to 89) who are daily users of the living room of the Pensioners' Association in Bjelovar (City in Croatia). To check attitudes towards aging, a questionnaire was applied to examine in the first part what chronological age indicates old people and how long they want to live, the second part refers to the claims about why they want to live so long and the last one refers to the tendency of respondents to age.

Results: The significance of the Mann-Whitney test indicates statistically significant differences ($p < 0.05$) between the results of respondents in attitudes towards aging regarding to marital status, place of residence and level of education. Respondents living in a marital union perceive a more positive attitude than respondents who are unmarried, widowed and divorced. It has also been observed that a higher level of education has a positive effect on the perception of attitude towards aging.

Conclusion: Attitude towards aging and how old we feel will be greatly influenced by social and personal events, as well as our own physical condition. By educating and taking care of their health, the elderly are changing their own attitude, and they encourage society to reflect and change stereotypes towards aging.

Keywords: age; aging; elderly; attitudes; stereotypes