



1<sup>st</sup> World Congress on Healthy Ageing, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

**ABSTRACT 105**

**Title:** Is aging a problem or is it a problem of ageism? The views of the older adults in Hong Kong

**Authors:**

TIU, MMH1; DHSc, RN

LEE, JKL2; PhD, RN

LAM, SPK3; Master in Health Care Management, RN

NG, BTY4; Master of Primary Health Care, RN

**Institution:** Nursing team, The Open University of Hong Kong

**Key words:** Ageism, Older adults in Hong Kong, qualitative study

**Background:** Aging is the accumulation of changes in person over time. It is a neural, inevitable process of life. However, it is frequently associated with another term –problem–in which has implied a negative perception towards aging. Is aging itself caused the problems or is it a problem of ageism? Since there has been a dearth of research in ageism, the meaning of it is obscured.

**Objectives:** To explore the meaning of ageism from the perspectives of the older adults and to identify the strategies to reduce ageism in Hong Kong.

**Methods:** A purposive sampling strategy was used to conduct this study. Fifteen older adults who aged 65 and above lived in the community were recruited to participate in this study. In-depth, unstructured interviews were used to generate the data. Interviews were audiotaped, transcribed, and then analyzed using phenomenological method of qualitative research.

**Results:** Participants perceived that they were frequently being stereotyped as poverty stricken, and as burdens to society because of the physical change. Sense of being devalued because of the negative images projected by the mass media was also revealed. It was confirmed that aging itself is not a problem but ageism is. A variety of strategies to reduce ageism were suggested by the participants.

**Conclusions:** Older adults in Hong Kong have offered the strength, wisdom and the sacrifice that made this city great. However, because of the existence of ageism, their views on aging were not very positive. The results identified in this study enhance our understanding of meaning of ageism among the older adults in Hong Kong and can contribute to the development of strategies to avoid ageism in future.