

Session Identifier: B.1

Session Theme: Representations and Responses to Aging

Thursday, June 16, 2016

1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

The Longevity Dividend, the Humanities, and Collaborations and Networks in Aging Studies

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Cross-disciplinary collaboration in gerontology can foster methodological developments that have significant positive effects on human health. Organizations such as the European Network in Aging Studies and North American Network in Aging Studies (NANAS), which was initially led by scholars from Gerontology, Literature, the Health Humanities, and Age Studies, foster such research. Such groups promote humanities and arts approaches in gerontology and greater gerontological literacy in the humanities through their missions “to facilitate sustainable interdisciplinary collaborations and methodologies that bridge the medical and social sciences and the humanities, supporting research that increases understandings of the cultural meanings of the aging processes across the lifespan” to improve health and quality of life for elders (NANAS.org). One current project combines research on ageism’s negative impact on healthspan and lifespan, which can change life-expectancy averages by 7.5 years (Levy, Slade, Kunkel, & Kasl 2002; Wurm, Tesch-Römer, & Tomasik 2007) with studies that suggest viewing and discussing a PBS documentary about aging can reduce students’ ageist ideation by an average of 71% (Ragan & Bowen 2001). Humanities faculty have experience showing and leading discussions about videos. Moreover, offering this intervention to the substantial number of undergraduate students who take literature or film studies classes could have a tremendous long term impact on public health (Marshall 2015). Cross-disciplinary efforts are needed to deliver and assess the long-term impact of such interventions.

Moses’s New Commandments for Baby Boomers: How the use of Cartoons in Moses Znaimer’s Zoomer Philosophy Constructs the Ideal Image of Aging for Baby Boomers

Dr. Linda Caissie, St. Thomas University; Dr. Deborah Kestin van den Hoonaard, St. Thomas University

In October 2008 the Canadian Association for Retired Persons (CARP) relaunched its magazine. It changed the name of the magazine from *CARP Magazine* to *Zoomer Magazine* in an attempt to attract younger people to the organization and to the magazine; the new magazine suggests its readers are now “men and women 45 and up.” According to Zoomer’s founder media mogul Moses Znaimer, this new magazine is for the (Baby) Boomers with Zip: successful, forever middle-age, affluent, white, upper-Canadian, and urban. Inspired by Hugh Hefner’s *The Playboy Philosophy*, Znaimer has written e-books on the *Zoomer Philosophy* which “reveals the secrets” of age and ageing for Baby Boomers. In addition, Znaimer has used cartoons to further illustrate his philosophy. By using ethnographic content analysis, this paper examines the underlying meaning of these cartoons. Forty-one cartoons in four volumes of *Zoomer Philosophy*, published in 2012 to 2015 were analyzed and compared to Moses Znaimer’s philosophy he discusses in each of his volumes. This paper concludes that the *Zoomer Philosophy* constructs an ideology of successful aging, for Baby Boomers that is male, white, affluent, urban, and forever middle-age.

LGBT Individuals and End-of-Life Preparation: Nova Scotia Findings and Policy Implications
Dr. Áine Humble, Mount Saint Vincent University; Dr. Jacqueline Gahagan, Dalhousie University

In 2014 and 2015, LGBT individuals and service providers participated in four focus groups in Halifax: (a) lesbian and bisexual women (n = 6), (b) gay and bisexual men (n = 8), (c) transgender individuals (n = 2), and (d) service providers (n = 4). Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals' ages ranged from 59 to 82, with an average age of 67. A variety of chronic illnesses were present. All of the service provider participants were women, and of these, two self-identified as heterosexual. Framed by minority stress theory, four main themes emerged from the analysis of the focus group data. First, communities of care were changing over time, tied in with a lack of unifying cause or issue, and not necessarily related to families of origin. Second, individuals had difficulty asking other for help, not wanting to be a burden on others, and afraid of the paid care that they might possibly receive (anticipating heteronormativity and/or homophobia). Third, although some had made some preparations for end of life (e.g., three quarters had prepared a will and close to half had living wills and durable power of attorney), there was a fearfulness of talking about death and dying, which delayed end-of-life preparations, and some preparations were out of date and required updating. Fourth, technology was seen as both helpful and potentially negative. Results are discussed in light of Nova Scotian end of life policies.