

# Age discrimination, health and wellbeing in the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing

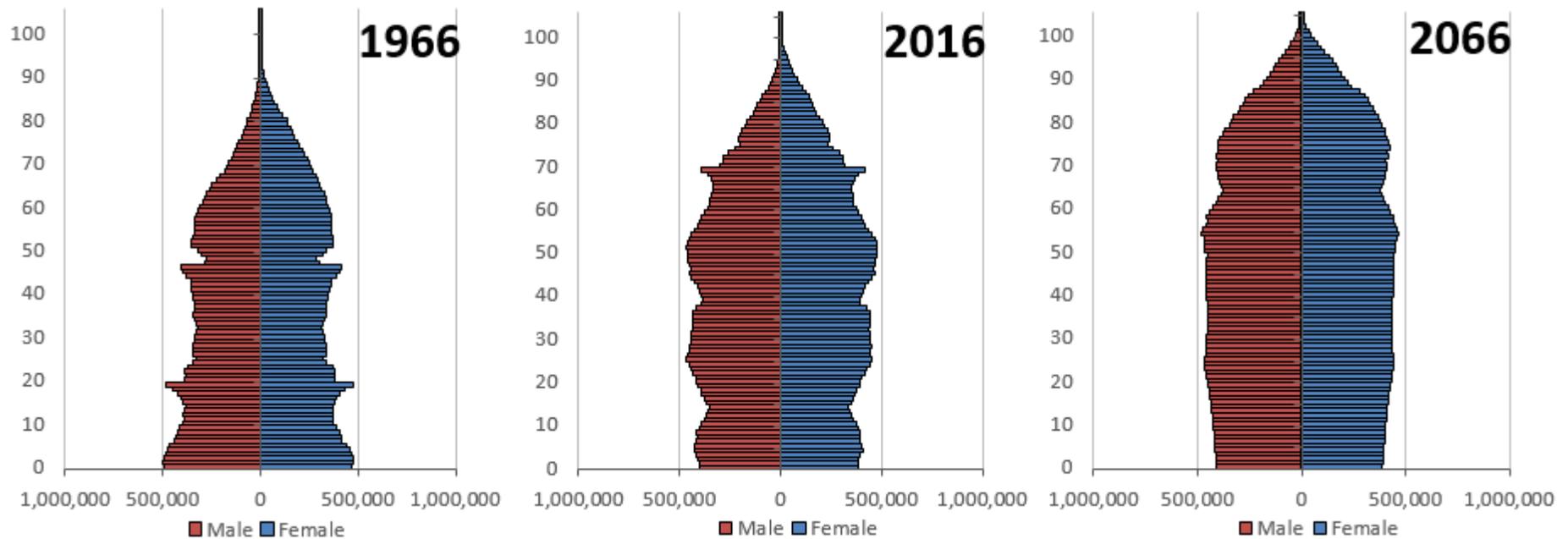
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# Background



Population pyramids, 1966, 2016 and 2066 (principal projection), UK



# Background



NEWS RELEASE 31-MAY-2019

## Racism has a toxic effect

*A USC Dornsife-led study may explain how racial discrimination raises the risks of disease among African Americans*

### **Link Between Racial Discrimination and Cardiovascular Health**

A new study finds that experiencing the trauma of discrimination at a young age is tied to heart troubles later in life

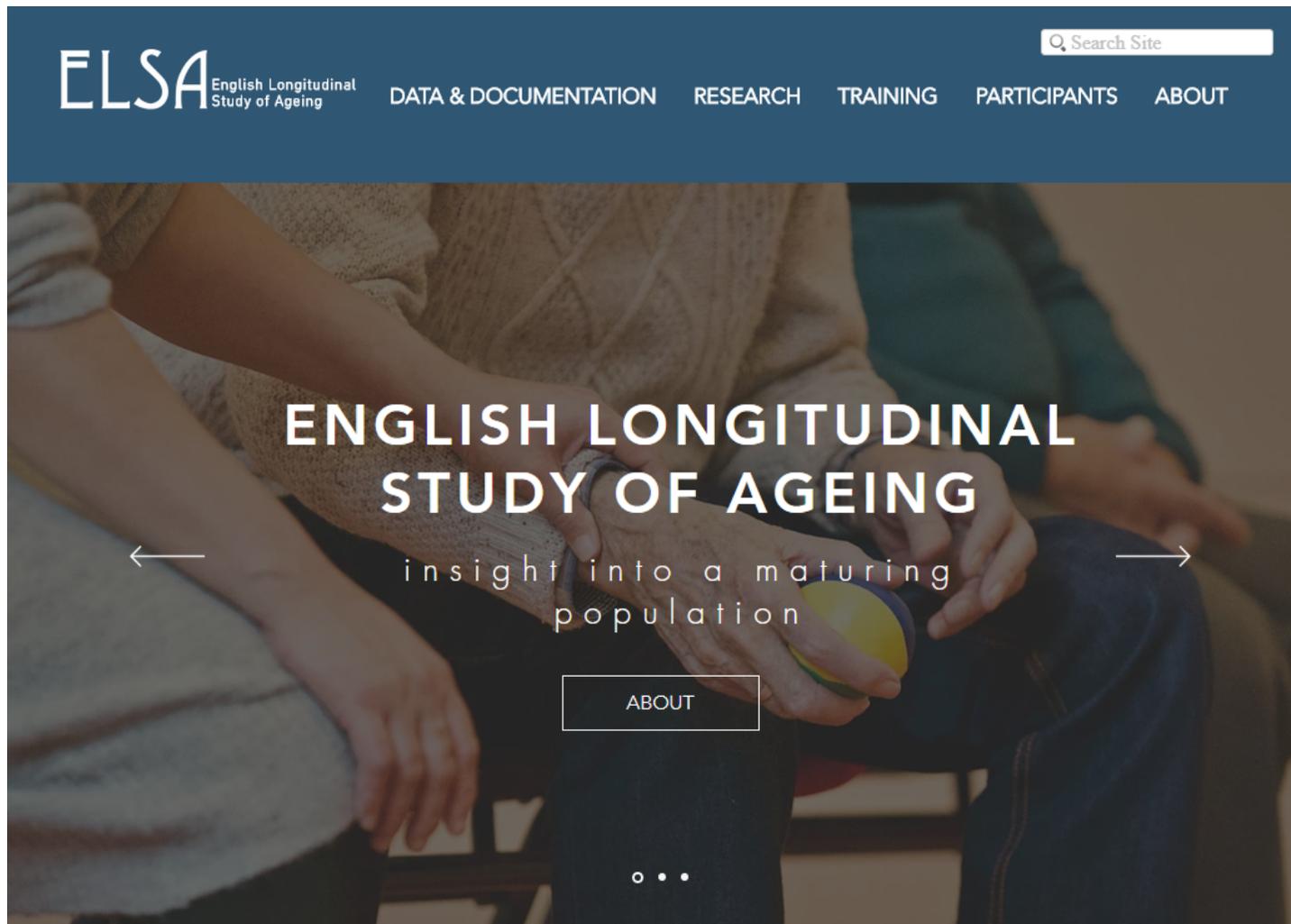
## Scientists Start To Tease Out The Subtler Ways Racism Hurts Health

November 11, 2017 · 8:07 AM ET



## Racism Can Increase Black Peoples' Risk for Chronic Illness, New Study Says

# Method



<https://www.elsa-project.ac.uk/>

# Exposure: age discrimination



**30** In your day-to-day life, how often have any of the following things happened to you?

*Tick one box on each line*

	Almost every day	At least once a week	A few times a month	A few times a year	Less than once a year	Never
You are treated with less courtesy or respect than other people	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6 248
You receive poorer service than other people at restaurants or stores	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6 249
People act as if they think you are not clever	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6 250
You are threatened or harassed	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6 251
You receive poorer service or treatment than other people from doctors or hospitals	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6 252



# Cross-sectional results



	Perceived age discrimination		No perceived age discrimination		Adjusted odds ratio* (95% CI)	p value
	n	% (95% CI)†	n	% (95% CI)†		
Fair or poor self-rated health	1942	28.6 (26.6–30.6)	5784	24.0 (22.9–25.1)	1.32 (1.17–1.48)	<0.0001
Cancer	1943	6.3 (5.3–7.5)	5788	6.3 (5.7–6.9)	1.00 (0.81–1.24)	0.97
Diabetes	1943	11.8 (10.4–13.2)	5788	11.0 (10.2–11.8)	1.09 (0.93–1.28)	0.33
Coronary heart disease	1943	16.5 (14.9–18.2)	5788	13.3 (12.4–14.2)	1.33 (1.14–1.54)	<0.0001
Stroke	1943	4.2 (3.3–5.1)	5788	4.2 (3.7–4.7)	1.04 (0.80–1.34)	0.82
Chronic lung disease	1943	6.8 (5.7–7.9)	5788	5.1 (4.5–5.7)	1.37 (1.11–1.69)	0.01
Arthritis	1943	43.6 (41.4–45.8)	5788	38.3 (37.1–39.6)	1.27 (1.14–1.41)	<0.0001
Limiting long-standing illness	1943	38.7 (36.5–40.9)	5783	32.6 (31.4–33.8)	1.35 (1.21–1.51)	<0.0001
Depressive symptoms	1928	19.2 (17.4–21.0)	5718	12.0 (11.2–12.8)	1.81 (1.57–2.08)	<0.0001

\*Odds ratios are for the group reporting perceived age discrimination relative to the group not reporting perceived age discrimination, and are adjusted for age, sex, and wealth. †Data are the proportion of the sample reporting each listed health problem.

**Table 2: Cross-sectional associations between perceived age discrimination and health status**

# Prospective results



	Perceived age discrimination		No perceived age discrimination		Adjusted odds ratio (95% CI)*	p value
	n	% (95% CI)†	n	% (95% CI)†		
Fair or poor self-rated health	1023	19.3 (16.9–21.7)	3298	15.7 (14.5–16.9)	1.32 (1.10–1.58)	0.01
Cancer	1333	7.3 (5.9–8.7)	3955	5.8 (5.1–6.5)	1.28 (1.00–1.63)	0.07
Diabetes	1256	6.2 (4.9–7.5)	3783	4.8 (4.1–5.5)	1.33 (1.01–1.75)	0.05
Coronary heart disease	1194	4.3 (3.2–4.5)	3725	2.6 (2.1–3.1)	1.66 (1.18–2.35)	0.01
Stroke	1368	4.5 (3.4–5.6)	4039	3.2 (2.7–3.7)	1.48 (1.08–2.10)	0.02
Chronic lung disease	1343	4.6 (3.5–5.7)	4011	3.1 (2.6–3.6)	1.50 (1.10–2.04)	0.02
Arthritis	802	18.4 (15.7–21.1)	2623	16.6 (15.2–18.0)	1.14 (0.93–1.40)	0.26
Limiting long-standing illness	883	26.0 (23.1–28.9)	2977	21.4 (19.9–22.9)	1.32 (1.10–1.57)	0.01
Depressive symptoms	1117	9.7 (8.0–11.4)	3609	7.0 (6.2–7.8)	1.47 (1.16–1.86)	0.01

\*Odds ratios are for the group reporting perceived age discrimination relative to the group not reporting perceived age discrimination, and are adjusted for age, sex, and wealth. †Data are the proportion of the sample reporting each listed health problem.

**Table 3: Longitudinal associations between perceived age discrimination and incident health problems**

# Possible mechanisms



Stress responses



Health risk behaviours



Ageism in medical settings

# Conclusions and implications

- Perceived age discrimination is linked with a host of adverse health outcomes
- Tackling ageism is important but likely difficult due to pervasive, deep-rooted negative stereotypes
- Societal level: raise public awareness, reduce discriminatory behaviour
- Clinical level: raising the issue of age discrimination could help identify older patients at risk of future health problems



# Read it in full



Lancet Public Health 2019; 4: 200-08

Articles

## Associations between age discrimination and health and wellbeing: cross-sectional and prospective analysis of the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing



*Sarah E Jackson, Ruth A Hackett, Andrew Steptoe*

### Summary

**Background** Age discrimination (or ageism) is pervasive in society. Other forms of discrimination (such as racism) have been linked with adverse health outcomes, but age discrimination has not been well studied in public health. We aimed to examine associations between perceived age discrimination and health and wellbeing in England.

**Methods** We did a longitudinal observational population study with data from the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing, a nationally representative sample of older men and women. Participants were aged 50 years or older and reported experiences of age discrimination via a face-to-face computer-assisted personal interview and a self-completed questionnaire between July, 2010, and June, 2011. Self-rated health, chronic health conditions, and depressive symptoms were assessed between July, 2010, and June, 2011, and between May, 2016, and June, 2017. We used logistic regression to test cross-sectional associations between perceived age discrimination and baseline health status and prospective associations between perceived age discrimination and incident ill health over 6 years. Analyses were adjusted for age, sex, and wealth.

**Findings** Our sample for cross-sectional analyses of 2010–11 data comprised 7731 people who took part in the face-to-



*Lancet Public Health* 2019;  
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