The age barrier in health care:
raising awareness and standing up to ageism

Australian Human Rights Commission

Acknowledgement of Country

Australian Human Rights Commission

The Australian Human Rights Commission acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia, and recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and culture.

We pay our respects to their Elders – past, present and future.

Panel discussion

Guest speakers

- Dr Johanna Skinner
- Margaret Ward
- Roda Shewsh

Moderator

- Dr Emily Steel

Agenda

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1. Experiences of ageing and ageism – good and bad
2. What drives ageism in health care?
3. What is working well?
4. What are we missing?
5. Where should we go now?
6. Q&A

What is ageism?

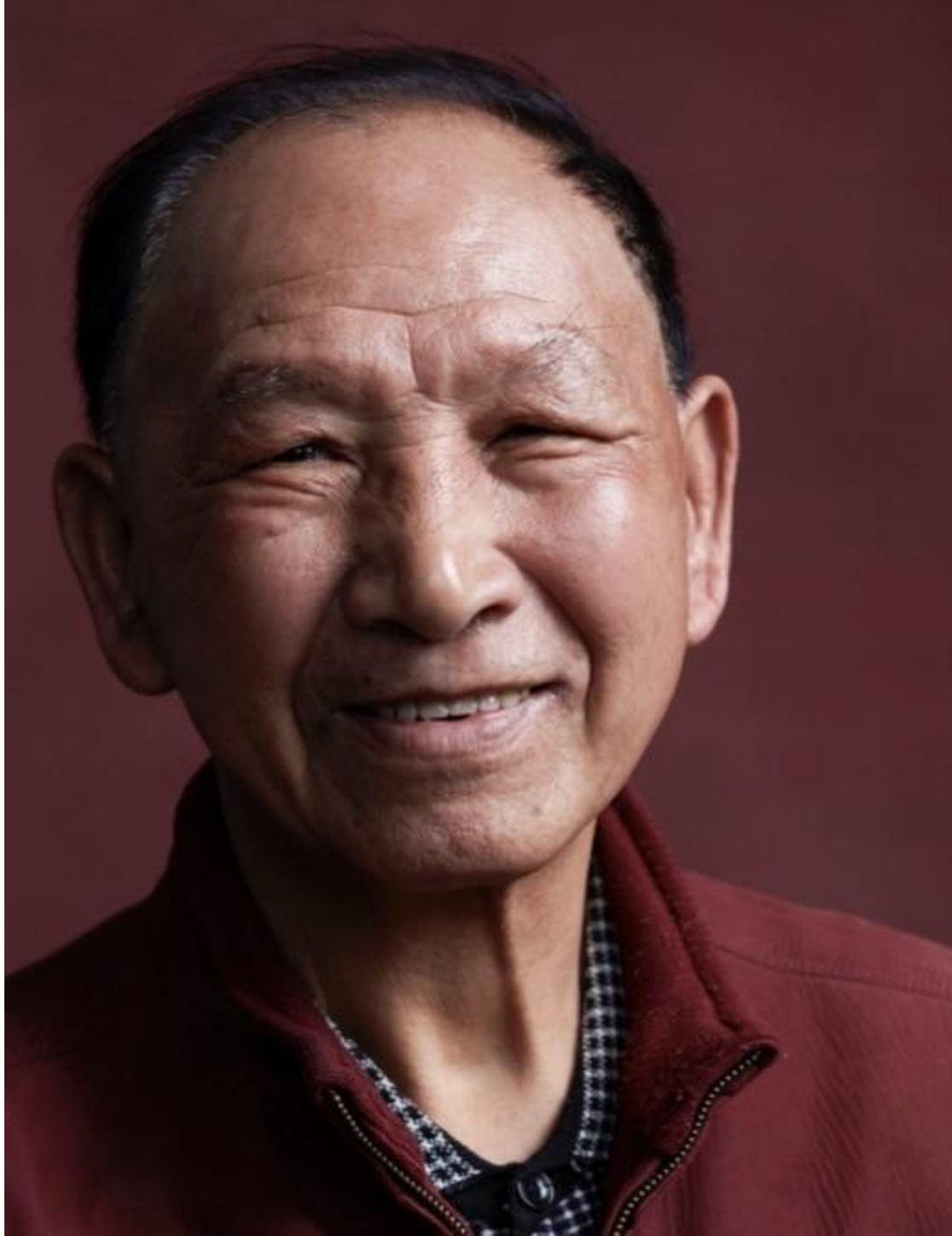
How we think (stereotypes)

How we feel (prejudices)

How we act (discrimination)

towards others and ourselves based on age.

WHO, 2021



Ageism is one of the most pervasive and tolerated forms of prejudice, but it is arguably the easiest one to dismantle.

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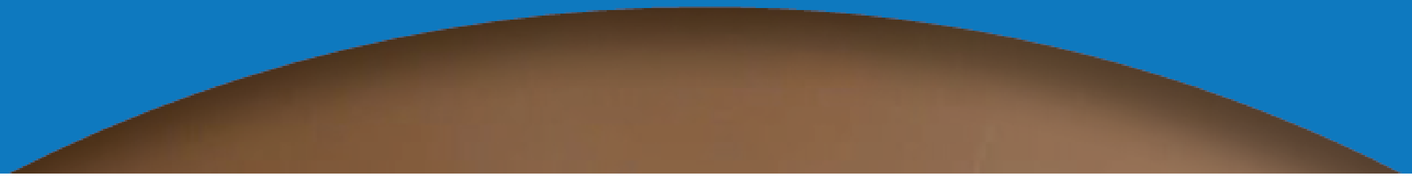
The age barrier: Older adults' experiences of ageism in health care

November 2025



Ageism in health care – key research findings

- Age-based assumptions.
- Perceived invisibility.
- Dismissal or attribution of health concerns.
- Left out of decision making.
- Perceptions of age influencing clinical decisions.
- Structural barriers reinforcing perceptions of ageism.
- Compounding effects of intersectional disadvantage.
  - →Impact on wellbeing and engagement.
  - →Importance of person-centre care.

Age isn’t the problem.

Ageism is.

Further information

Report: Changing Perspectives testing an ageism intervention (2023)

Report: The Age Barrier: older adults' experiences of ageism in health care (2025)

Project website: Breaking the Age Barrier: transforming age attitudes in health care

Contact us:

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