

## Ageism: What Makes Older Adults Vulnerable to COVID-19

**Authors :** Jenny Kwon

**Abstract :** Following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic globally, another type of pandemic, ageism, appeared on the surface. Ageism, the stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination directed towards others or oneself based on chronological age, has adversely impacted older adults' lives during the pandemic. In the short term, older adults struggled with health issues (e.g., high rate of infection and mortality) and experienced social disconnection (e.g., loneliness and depression). Ultimately, older adults' self-perceptions of aging, self-esteem and intergenerational relationships were negatively influenced. To closely look into the impact of ageism during the pandemic on U.S. older adults' aging process, the current study has three specific purposes. First, the study introduces a theoretical foundation (i.e., stereotype embodiment theory) in the development of ageism research. Second, the study reports on examples of ageism toward U.S. older adults manifested in the context of COVID-19. Finally, collective responsibilities and future research directions are proposed to fight against ageism.

**Keywords :** ageism, COVID-19, older adults, pandemic, stereotype embodiment

**Conference Title :** ICHAUCVPA 2022 : International Conference on Holistic Approaches to Understanding and Caring for Vulnerable Populations and Aging

**Conference Location :** Tokyo, Japan

**Conference Dates :** May 26-27, 2022