

Thinking you're old and frail

April 9 2013

Older adults who categorise themselves as old and frail encourage attitudinal and behavioural confirmation of that identity.

This is the conclusion of a study conducted by Krystal Warmoth and colleagues at University of Exeter Medical School, which is being presented today, 9th April 2013, at the British Psychological Society Annual Conference in Harrogate, UK.

Krystal Warmoth interviewed 29 [older adults](#) in the South West of England face-to-face. Interviews conducted asked about their experiences of ageing and frailty. Self-perception and identification related to one's health and participation in an active life. One's attitude could lead to a loss of interest in participating in social and physical activities, [poor health](#), [stigmatization](#), and reduced quality of life. One respondent stated it clearly, "if people think that they are old and frail, they will act like they're old and frail". A cycle of decline was also described whereby perceiving oneself as frail was felt to lead to disengaging in activities that could reduce the likelihood of frailty (such as, [physical exercise](#)) and, in turn, more health and functioning problems.

Krystal Warmoth concluded that: "this study gives insight into the role of social psychological factors in older adults' health and activity".

Provided by University of Exeter

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