

One in three older people experience age discrimination

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New research from the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing (ELSA) reveals 33 per cent of all older people experience perceived age discrimination, with less wealthy older men being at highest risk.

The study highlights the high levels of [age discrimination](#) faced by older people, a situation that worsens as they age. 26.6 per cent of people aged between 52 and 59 reported age [discrimination](#), a figure which rose to 37.2 per cent for adults aged between 70 and 79.

The research reveals that the group at the highest risk of age discrimination are better educated, retired men with the low levels of wealth.

- The poorest older people were 35 per cent more likely to report age discrimination than the wealthiest.
- Retired older people were 25 per cent more likely to report age discrimination than those who were still employed.

The research also highlighted that older men faced [higher levels](#) of perceived age discrimination in many aspects of their lives in comparison with women.

- 20.7 per cent of men over the age of 52 felt that they were accorded less courtesy because of their age, in comparison to 15.2 per cent of women.

- Ten per cent of men and nine per cent of women over the age of 52 felt that they had received poorer service or treatment from doctors or hospitals than younger people because of their age.

"This research on a large representative sample of older people in England shows high levels of age discrimination," says study author Professor Andrew Steptoe (UCL Epidemiology). "Around one in three men and women aged 52 and older report that they have been discriminated against because of their age, with higher levels in less well-off older people. It is particularly concerning that around one in ten felt that they had been discriminated against in health settings, while a similar number feel that they receive poorer service than younger people in shops and restaurants.

"Older people are an increasingly large proportion of the population, and we need to be more aware of the problem of ageism. Treating people of any age with respect and courtesy is good for society, and will help increase the wellbeing of senior citizens."

Jessica Watson, Research and Public Affairs Officer at the International Longevity Centre-UK, said: "This research reveals that millions of [older people](#) perceive themselves to be on the receiving end of age discrimination. We know from other research that the worries are not just perceived. For example, age discrimination in employment remains a significant barrier to working longer. We now have legislation in place to prevent discrimination on grounds of age, but this research highlights that we have a long way to go to change negative societal attitudes to age."

Provided by University College London

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