

Does your sense of humor change as you age?

October 2 2014



A UA researcher and two co-authors examined whether young, middle-aged and older adults found clips of inappropriate social behavior to be funny.

TV sitcoms in which characters make jokes at someone else's expense are no laughing matter for older adults, according to a University of Akron researcher.

Jennifer Tehan Stanley, an assistant professor of psychology, studied how young, middle-aged and older adults reacted to so-called "aggressive humor"—the kind that is a staple on shows like *The Office*.

By showing clips from *The Office* and other sitcoms (*Golden Girls*, *Mr. Bean*, *Curb Your Enthusiasm*) to adults of varying ages, she and colleagues at two other universities found that young and middle-aged adults considered aggressive humor to be funny while older adults did not. The [older adults](#) preferred "affiliative humor," in which a number of characters share and navigate an awkward situation.

Stanley and her co-authors, Monika Lohani of Brandeis University and Derek M. Isaacowitz of Northeastern University, published their findings in the journal *Psychology and Aging*.

The study raises some intriguing questions about our concept of what is funny. Is that concept based on factors peculiar to generations, or does it evolve over time as we age and, perhaps, mellow? Those possibilities will need to be explored in a future episode of [humor](#) research. Stay tuned.

More information: *Psychology and Aging*:
psycnet.apa.org/journals/pag/29/3/528

Provided by University of Akron

Citation: Does your sense of humor change as you age? (2014, October 2) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2014-10-humor-age.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is

provided for information purposes only.