



School of Health Professions

Defining the Old

Does this move ageism from the third
to the fourth age?

Professor Angela Kydd

After Work Lecture

6 June 2019
Winterthur

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Does this move ageism from the third to the fourth age?

Old age is an overused and underdefined term. The question ‘How old will you be when you are old?’ leads to many different answers. People in their teenage years will see old as 30, whilst people aged 60 may view being old as aged 80.

In the early 19th Century ‘old age’ was usually a time when people had retired and had a low life expectancy following retirement. However, with good sanitation, good health care and better working conditions, people globally are living longer into their 80s, 90s and 100s. To counter the fact that ‘old age can range from 60 to over 100’, sub-divisions of old age have been suggested – the young-old and the old-old, or those in the third age (60-79) and those in the fourth age (80 and over). Coupled with these sub-divisions are active and healthy ageing agendas. This puts people of retirement age and over in a more positive light, but is this pushing ageism onto the 80 year olds and over? Such ageism is also reflected in the attitudes to health care professionals working with the oldest-old; with caring for older people seen as a basic task requiring few skills. Nothing could be further from the truth. This lecture aims to be thought provoking and educational.



Angela Kydd, Clinical Professor in Nursing, Robert Gordon University and NHS Grampian.

Angela’s background involves nursing older people. Her interest is the oldest-old. She has an MSc (Gerontology) and a PhD (Nursing), which focused on the experiences of frail older people living in a care setting.

She has written and taught on gerontology and dementia courses. She wrote a nurse specialist programme in gerontological nursing which was revised for use by the World Health Organisation. Angela also teaches internationally and has led and partnered four Erasmus Intensive Programmes. She has led several funded projects, one of which involved the creation of bespoke philosophies of care underpinning practice development with staff in nursing homes, one on a seven country project on attitudes to nurses who work with older people and one on teaching student nurses to interview older people on their experiences of health and social care. She has co-edited a gerontology textbook and has contributed to an open access textbook on ageism. She is part of a Horizon 2020 project, which has 15 global PhD students studying aspects of ageism. She supervises two of these students.

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