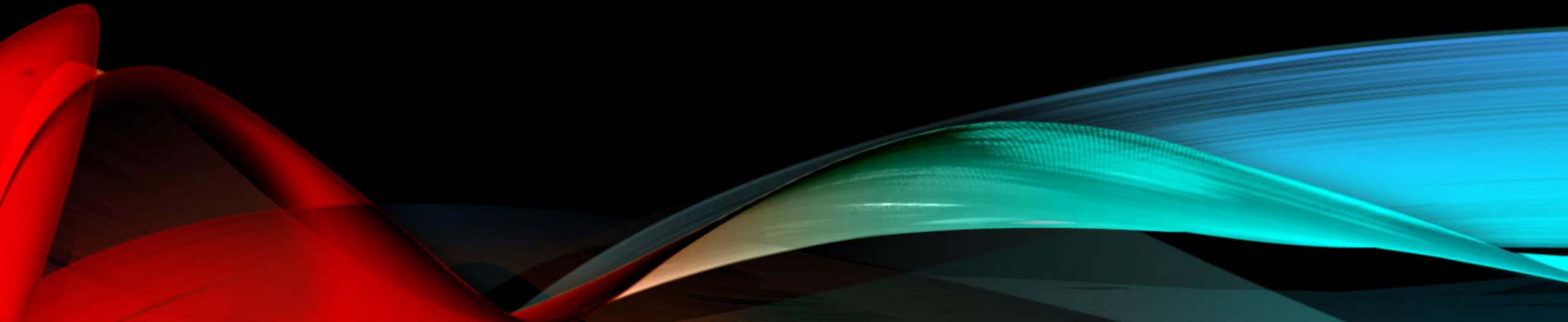




# AGEISM

**ITS AFFECT ON HEALTH AND WELLBEING**

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I have no conflicts of interest with respect to this or any of my presentations



# WHAT IS AGEISM

- Prejudice or discrimination against people based on their age
- Usually older people...but it can occur in people of any age
- It has a negative impact on the physical and mental health of the affected individual

# AGEISM IS A SYSTEMIC FORM OF OPPRESSION

- Not taken as seriously as
  - Racism
  - Sexism
  - Ableism ( discrimination based on a disability)

# WHERE AGEISM TAKES PLACE

- Institutional ageism
- Interpersonal ageism - social interactions
- Internalized ageism - a person's assumptions that are applied to ageist beliefs. The assumptions are not always right.

# AGEISM TYPES

- EXPLICIT - person is conscious of it
- IMPLICIT – person is not aware of it. Assumed unintentional

# RELEVANT DATA / FACTS

- 82% of Americans experience ageism on a regular basis
- 65 % of ageist beliefs are from the media
- 45% of ageist beliefs are interpersonal
- 36% of ageist beliefs are internalized



# LOTS OF EXAMPLES



# EXAMPLES IN THE WORKPLACE

- Refusing to hire someone over / under a certain age
- Asking for someone's age at a job interview when it is not relevant
- Enacting policies that unfairly privilege one age group over another
- Viewing older people as out of touch or less productive
- Viewing younger people as unskilled, irresponsible or untrustworthy
- Bullying or harassment

# AGEISM IN PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

- Treating family members as though they are invisible, unintelligent or expendable based on their age
- Making jokes that imply someone is less valuable or less worthy of respect based on their age
- Making offensive generalizations about specific generations
- Disregarding someone's concerns or wishes based on their age
- Taking advantage of someone's age for personal or financial gain

# AGEISM CAN LEAD TO ABUSE

- WHO

- 1 : 6 INDIVIDUALS OVER 60 EXPERIENCE SOME SORT OF ELDER ABUSE
- Emotional
- Physical
- Sexual
- Financial

# AGEISM IN HEALTHCARE

- Affects individuals from diagnosis to prognosis
- Affects health care policies
- Elder speak: baby talk
  - Patronizing
  - Reinforces unequal power dynamics

# LACK OF KNOWLEDGE

- Many health care providers make poor decisions based on a patient's age and lack of evidence to help define treatment options.
  - Assuming a patient is less independent than they really are based on their age
  - Need to always treat our patients based on their needs
  - Doctors, nurses and social workers will spend less time with their older patients and their communication tends to be more superficial

# AGEISM

- Higher rates of illness and increased risk taking behaviors
- Higher healthcare spending
- Poverty- higher healthcare costs as well as lack of health insurance exacerbates poverty. Poverty also worsens health which creates a vicious cycle
- Lower life expectancy
  - Decrease of 7.5 years
  - The number of older American is increasing making ageism an increasingly important issue

# HOW TO STOP AGEISM

- EDUCATE
  - Raise awareness
  - Educate to dispel myths and stereotypes
- Intergenerational intervention – create cooperation and empathy between age groups
- Law and policy changes – reduce inequity and discrimination



# INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

- Become aware of it
- Learn about it
- Listen to your patients and never assume anything especially based on age
- Develop advocacy skills
- Take action
  - Its not about rescuing people
  - Its about advocating for them and speaking out against ageist beliefs
  - Support and advocating for everyone regardless of age

# SUMMARY

- Ageism is very harmful especially in older people who are more likely to need medical care as they age
- Resulting discrimination tends to lower the quality of care, and preventable illness and disability
- Educate, cooperation and policy changes are crucial to end it