Never too late to become physical active: battle against ageism

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Outline

- Background
  - The ageing Europe
  - The ageing process
  - Level of physical activity among elderly people
- Ageism and physical activity among elderly people
- Concluding comments
The ageing Europe

- 2025: $\frac{1}{3} \geq 60$ yrs
- Increase of 65-79 yrs and 80 yrs + until around 2050
The ageing process

- Reduced
  - aerobic capacity
  - muscle strength
  - balance
  - flexibility

- Increased risk for
  - Cancer
  - Cardiovascular diseases
  - Type 2 diabetes
  - Osteoporosis
  - Dementia
  - Depression

Dependant upon interaction with the environment!

Age per see or inactivity?
Level of physical activity among elderly people

‘...any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that result in caloric expenditure’.

Caspersen et al 1985
Ageism

’...a systematic stereotyping of and discrimination against people because they are old, just as racism and sexism accomplish this with skin color and gender.

Butler, 1989
Ageism – different from other ‘isms’

- Age classification is not static
- No one is exempt achieving the status of old
  - Ageist with respect to self
  - Ageist with respect to others
The emphasis on youth
The emphasis on productivity
Ageism as a barrier to physical activity among elderly people

- Emphasis on youth participation by sport management
- Limited programs for elderly
- Lack of interest by the media in senior’s events
- Lack of organized events and community programs for older people
- ’I’m too old’ and ‘It’s too late’
How to increase the level of physical activity among elderly people?

- Make the topic relevant
- Contribute with knowledge
- Focus upon health status – not chronological age
- Ensure the experience of safety
- Motivate for physical activity
Concluding comments

- Lack of awareness and recognition about the impact of physical activity for elderly people
- Increase the level of physical activity by being an advocate for reducing ageism
- Physical activity for all elderly people is a fundamental component of public health work
It’s never too late!

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