

Stereotype-based helplessness and proactive approach to aging

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Poster 03, June 14, 2023, 2:15 PM - 3:15 PM

For several decades, modern society has been facing the problem of improving the quality of life of older people in the face of increasing life expectancy. The formation of aging strategies at earlier stages is considered as one of the most progressive approaches to improving the quality of life. However, the use of these strategies is mediated by both negative and positive factors. Our analysis showed that at the junction of two specific psychological phenomena - stereotypes about aging and learned helplessness, there was another little-studied mechanism – stereotype-based helplessness. The aim of the present study was to investigate associations between strategies, promoting development of resources for better aging, stereotype-based helplessness and psychological well-being during the period of transition from adulthood to aging.

Participants were 97 older adults aged 57-65. Methods: Questionnaire on stereotype-based helplessness (Strizhitskaya et.al., 2022), Psychological well-being Scale (Ryff, Zhukovskaya, Troshikhina, 2011), list of strategies that favor better life in aging (22 strategies based on theoretical analysis and estimated on a Likert scale from 1 to 5).

Correlation analysis showed multiple correlations of stereotype-based helplessness with psychological well-being and strategies of aging (all negative). Regression analysis revealed that stereotype-based helplessness was predicted by Personal Growth scale ($R^2=13,4\%$, $F=14,664$, $p=0.000$). Using path analysis we found that stereotype-based helplessness affected strategies of aging via well-being characteristics. Thus our study confirmed the impact of stereotype-based helplessness on both psychological well-being and proactive strategies of aging. The study was supported by the RSF grant 22-28-00869.

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No conflict of interests

Keywords

stereotype-based helplessness, proactive aging, psychological resources, futurization of aging