

Cosmetic Procedures and the Effects of Ageism towards Older Women
by
Maple Carocci

**Submitted to the Board of Study in Sociology
School of Natural and Social Sciences
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Bachelor of Arts**

**Purchase College
State University of New York**

Kristen Karlberg

Alexis Silver

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Literature Review	6
Methods	17
Findings	20
Analysis	29
Conclusion	37
Bibliography	40

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to uncover and discuss the effects of various outside influences on ageism towards older women and the desire to alter one's appearance through cosmetic procedures. Data for this study was collected by interviewing 4 women and surveying 100 women, all over the age of 45. The questions in both the interviews and surveys dealt with topics of ageism, consideration of undergoing cosmetic procedures, the usage of cosmetic products, and the influences either experienced or seen that would cause such consideration. Both the literature and data show outside influences such as advertising and social media, as well as including other topics such as cosmetic usage and the normalization of cosmetic procedures enforcing ageist beliefs which is often confused with medical rhetoric in the form of cosmeceuticals. The data collected also reflect the interconnectivity between normalized ageism, gendered ageism, appearance anxiety, advertisements, and the desire for women to undergo cosmetic procedures due to the variables. This research brings attention to the experiences of older women within this society through the lens of appearance-based ageism and addresses the effects of multiple different facets on the experiences.

Introduction

An advertisement starts with a woman wearing white against a white background, looking unhappily into a mirror. The camera zooms in on her poking and prodding at wrinkles on her face or bags under her eyes while a narrator makes a generic negative comment about skin elasticity, collagen, or appearance. Then it cuts to a slow panning shot of a bottle or a small container with a product inside, with slowed visuals of the ingredients or of the container being splashed with water, ending this shot with a generic illustration of a chemical compound. The unseen female narrator discusses the percentages of chemicals in the product and the ones not included, without explaining any negatives or benefits to either. Followed by a quick statement about being a scientist or dermatologist approved before speeding through the rest of the advertisement. The shot goes back to the woman from the beginning, she is now smiling as she spreads a cream or a clear serum onto her face. She states with a sense of relief about her wrinkles being gone or how she looks and feels refreshed. The advertisement ends with more shots of the container of the product, named along the lines of regeneration, age rewind, skin boost, or something similar. This seems to be the generic screenplay of most advertisements about cosmetics and cosmetic procedures.

Cosmetic procedures and products are marketed with the connotation of creating health benefits and fixing the spreading ailment of old age. This is done by selling the cure as a younger appearance to mask any visible signs of aging. Companies such as L'Oréal, Estée Lauder, and Avon are the main producers of cosmetics with the term "cosmeceuticals". Instead of just saying cosmetics, this new way of branding creates the connotation of a medical benefit to using these products.

Treating old age, or the appearance of old age, as an illness or an impaired state, creates the idea that individuals who are middle-aged and above are an “at risk” population (Smirnova, 2012) that need to be cured to look young again. This idea is harmful to these individuals who are developing signs of aging, such as wrinkles, gray hair, loose skin, balding, etc. This creates a pressure to look younger by using cosmetic products. The societal pressure to cover up signs of aging contributes to ageism in regards to body image and appearance.

There are also many other influences besides the idea of cosmeceuticals and the companies that advertise as such. One of the major influences that normalizes the idea of cosmetic surgery as being the norm is mass media. There are countless advertisements, from companies advertising cosmetics, to generic advertisements featuring women actors. It has become more normalized to not see women who have visibly aged, than it has been to see older women who have either used cosmetic products or undergone a cosmetic procedure. The ageist beliefs towards older women in society are often influenced by the physical appearance of aging. The visible appearance of aging in an individual has been linked with competence, social class, and attractiveness (Clarke, 2018). Examples of these concepts would be the older someone appears the less competent they are perceived, social class is linked to the cost of undergoing procedures or using products in order to mask signs of aging, an individuals who is older but still appears young with less visible signs of aging is perceived as having a higher social class and older individuals with visible signs of aging can be seen as having a lower social standing due to the funds required to undergo and purchase products and procedures. These beliefs are perpetuated by workplace environments, media, advertisements, and many other variables and influences that can form societal opinions.

The purpose of this study is to contribute to the research on ageism but to also fill the gap for research on ageism that affects middle-aged women and the factors that may cause older women to consider undergoing cosmetic procedures or surgeries . In this paper, I will go through the previous research done on the effects of advertising and the influence it has on the general public, and then focus on how studies have shown the direct effect on women who see these advertisements and how it influences how they see themselves in society. I argue that the commercialization and medicalization of cosmetic surgeries and procedures is contributing to ageism towards women over the age of 45.

The research conducted within the literature review has discovered similar concepts shared within previous research. These concepts are the normalization of cosmetic procedures and ageism, the medicalization of cosmetic procedures, the advertising of cosmetic procedures, the outside influence of women's opinions, and social media influence. This research is also framed within the theoretical framework of stigma and the presentation of self to further emphasize the subtopics listed.

Literature review:

There have been previous studies done on this topic that have focused on ageism, stigma, theories around aging, and the outside influences contributing to agism. on similar topics and sub topics. There are many ways in which the influences, opinions, and public perspective on these procedures overlap and intersect each other. These concepts are often taken into consideration when looking at how ageism and cosmetic surgery are related. The normalization, medicalization, and the outside influences surrounding cosmetic surgeries and procedures are incredibly crucial to take into consideration when discussing this topic.

There are a multitude of different reasons for individuals to undergo cosmetic surgery, but that does not mean that all these reasons are for personal reasons or for personal gain. There are a multitude of other influences and reasons that would encourage a woman to undergo these procedures in the pursuit of appearing younger. The reasons as to why women would choose to undergo these procedures could be from social pressures, media representation, or the fear of being placed into a separate social class.

Theoretical Framework

In order to examine the relationship between older women and the choice to undergo cosmetic surgery or other procedures, I look at the work of Goffman. Using his work, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, and the categories of performance and appearance, it creates a framework for my argument. Goffman conceptualizes one's performance as any and all activity that an individual has in front of a set of observers (1959). These performances that an individual conducts each day gives a meaning to themselves and to others and the individual situation. Every person is like an actor on a stage, putting on a different persona to fit their audience. In a similar fashion, older women are changing what they look like to better suit their persons to fit into their "audience". An example of this in relation to my argument, would be older women being perceived day to day, and the interactions and situations that the individual is placed in created connotations and ideas surrounding the individual. This would be done through impressions and opinions based on physical appearance.

According to Goffman, he conceptualizes appearance as a function to portray the performer's social class and status. Appearance can also tell the viewer about the performer's social role, for example, a uniform, formal dress, and other aspects in which one chooses to present themselves. For aging women, physical change in appearance challenges social status due

to value being prescribed to physical attractiveness (Clarke 2018). One's appearance and how it communicates socially assigned aspects of the individual, having visible signs of aging for older women creates the separate social category of being old. With the stereotypes and stigma surrounding being deemed as 'old', Goffman's theory of stigma can be applied.

To investigate the societal consequences of older women choosing to appear visibly aged instead of covering it or correcting it with surgery He conceptualizes a stigma as an attribute which deeply discredits its possessor (Goffman, 1963). In this case, the stigma around these women would be that they are old, and to societal connotations of what being old means. The preexisting negative age stereotypes, discrimination and stigma are prevalent, combined with an older woman with an appearance without any beauty work done often has the connotation of moral decline due to the stigma around aging.

Signs of visible aging and the stigmas surrounding aging, can influence women's consideration of undergoing cosmetic surgery to preserve the desired presentation of self, and the ways in which that presentation is perceived and seen by other individuals. With this possible motivation to undergo cosmetic procedures being based within the ever-present opinions and appearances of other individuals, the normalization and prevalence of cosmetics and cosmetic procedures can grow and develop based on the desire to change or alter one's presentation of self to avoid negative stigma.

Normalization of Cosmetic Procedures and Ageism

There are many ways in which cosmetic procedures are pushed towards being the norm, not just limited to an individual's presentation of self. This can be seen within anti-aging rhetoric, negativity surrounding visible signs of age and older women's appearance.

The idea of undergoing cosmetic surgery in order to reduce signs of age, is to mask or cover up any visible signs of age. Outward signs of aging with stigma include wrinkles, balding, sagging skin, and gray hair. Kathryn Bayer (2005) aimed to find the reasoning as to why visible signs of aging are seen as something negative. Bayer did this by analyzing a book written by dermatologist Nicholas Perricone. In his book, he defines aging as a form of illness that has a definite cure instead of apparent signs of aging being natural and normal. This is one documented instance of an individual comparing aging to something that can be cured or needs to be cured. Another way in which cosmetic surgeries and procedures have been commercialized in a way to create an expectation of aging, are the ways in which diets, medication, face creams and exercises have been marketed to avoid the “problems” of age and maintain a young or youthful body and appearance (Clarke, 2018)

Ageism is that it is a socially constructed concept to justify unjust treatment of older individuals. In an article written by Christine Overall (2006), she argues that ageism is a socially constructed mechanism put in place in order to perpetuate the oppression of older people. Overall argues the connection between ageism and the concept of impairment due to how they can be applied to an individual, “...impairment is conceptually constructed; that is, the term “impairment” itself is given a definition by extension, by picking out certain states of certain physical features and attributing significance to them as fundamentally defining individuals and groups of individuals as atypical, abnormal or defective” (Overall, 2006). Overall connects impairment and ageism as old age is seen as an impaired state due to certain visible features or characteristics that separates them into a category. I build on this idea as visible signs of aging and aging have separated older individuals into a group that negatively affects appearance, perception and body image.

With aging sometimes being seen as an impaired state, there is also the idea that not continuing to look young as an individual ages means that they have “failed” aging (Cecil et.al., 2022). Although visible aspects of aging can be prevalent in an individual, not countering “negative consequences” of aging will cause the individual to not achieve the ideal “successful” aging process (Cecil et.al., 2022). With the concept of successful and failed aging, there is another form of media products aging called “positive aging”. This idea is meant to represent the benefits of aging and not to portray aging in a negative light, however it has become synonymous with looking youthful and carries an anti-aging rhetoric (Bayer, 2005). With the message of positive aging revolving mainly around being active and healthy, paired with the stigma surrounding old age being the opposite of these ideas, positive aging gets misconstrued with the need to retain youthful qualities as one ages which in turn creates the anti-aging rhetoric. Positive aging is prominent in media, such as advertisements and commercials, mainstream media signals aging or older women are not desirable, newsworthy, or interesting (Edström, 2018). With these two variables alone, with positive aging being misconstrued with remaining youthful and mainstream media creating the belief that older women aren’t desirable, each portraying older or aged individuals creates the imperative to change one’s appearance to look younger through usage of cosmetics or cosmetic surgery.

Aging isn't seen as interesting, desirable, or newsworthy, but instead is viewed as an impaired state and as something that needs a cure or to be fixed. This anti-aging rhetoric exemplifies the normalization of cosmetic procedures due to the expectation to use such procedures and products to reduce or cover up visible signs of age. In response to these ideas and beliefs, cosmetic procedures become normalized due to being given more opportunities to exemplify the perceived medical benefits.

Medicalization of Cosmetic Procedures

There are ways in which advertising and descriptions of procedures and products make it appear to hold medical benefits for individuals who wish to undergo said procedure. The belief that aging is a medical risk and an impaired state, gives way to the opportunity for creating a medicinal connotation to certain cosmetic procedures and products. The cosmetic industry uses the word “cosmeceutical” to refer to products that have both cosmetic and medical benefits. A few examples of cosmeceutical would be anti-aging serums or creams, or products that contain antioxidants and vitamins that claim to make chemical changes to the skin. This is not the only example of cosmetic procedures, products, or surgeries claiming to have medical benefits.

The ways in which these products are marketed and advertised emphasizes that women who have visible signs of aging are treated as an at-risk population in need of a cure or medical attention. On the same note, this depicts old age as a disease or an illness. In a study done by Michelle Hannah Smirnova, looking at 124 advertisements of cosmetics and cosmeceuticals in the magazine *US More* found three major themes in these advertisements. The three major themes being a promise of eternal youth, trust that science has ‘magic’ qualities, and having a will to youth (Smirnova, 2012). These three themes are what give the advertisements on cosmeceuticals marketability by claiming and advertising mass medicinal benefits to appearing younger. These themes also bring in the connotation that products advertised as cosmeceuticals have the capability to “cure” old age. This type of advertising around cosmeceuticals creates the idea that there is a cure for old age. This has the influence and impact on how individuals view old age and aging.

One company in particular that uses marketing and advertising of their product in a somewhat misleading way is Allergan. This company is behind the creation of BOTOX, and the

usage for therapeutic reasons, cosmetic reasons, and health reasons. BOTOX, or Botulinum Toxin Type A, is a neurotoxin that targets the nerves and affects the muscles near the injection site. The reason that this product has had such an influence on the cosmetic procedures industry is due to the aesthetic and therapeutic results and effects of BOTOX injections. The therapeutic aspects of BOTOX injections are migraine relief and the diminishing of hyperhidrosis symptoms. One cosmetic effect of BOTOX is that it smooths out wrinkles on the face, due to the prevention of the muscles of the face moving causing the skin to crease. The benefits that the company Allergan capitalize on the concept of beauty being young, gendered and self-actualized (Mello, 2012). However, with these benefits there are also dangers and side effects of using BOTOX injections to treat visible aging. The side effects that are associated with BOTOX can include injection pain and bleeding, muscle weakness, upper respiratory infection, hoarseness or trouble speaking, loss of bladder control, trouble breathing or swallowing, double vision, neck pain, flu symptoms, blurred vision and drooping eyelids (Mello, 2012). With this list of side effects, there appear to be more dangers to using BOTOX injections than benefits, however, Allergan presents the benefits of BOTOX that capitalize off the normative pressure to conform to the societally constructed beauty ideals. The advertising of BOTOX obscured the distinction between the medical and cosmetic benefits.

In a paper written by Michelle Hannah Smirnova (2012), she argues that the creator and company that is behind BOTOX cosmetic, Allergan, relies on the socially constructed concept of beauty in order to sell the cosmeceutical. I build on this idea that socially constructed ideas of beauty for women tend to be young, feminine, and confident, with the ideals for beauty as well as the perceived benefits of BOTOX it encourages older women to undergo these injections to mask signs of aging. By making old age and aging be perceived as something in need of a cure,

as well as adding onto a socially constructed idea of beauty which in most cases is achievable through the usage of cosmetic procedures and products contributes to the medicalization of cosmetic procedures. With cosmeceuticals, namely BOTOX, has perceived medical benefits created through the usage and advertisements and language used surrounding the procedures and products.

Advertising of Cosmetic Procedures

There are many variables and influences that have the potential to encourage women to undergo cosmetic procedures. Advertising is one of the major ways in which cosmetic products or procedures are marketed to the public. They can be found on television, billboards, social media, and in many other content outlets.

A 2010 study examined what prompted women to seek cosmetic surgery. In this study, Slevac and Tiggeman used questionnaires to evaluate the weight of particular factors in women's decisions. The study found that motivation to have cosmetic surgery was related to aging anxiety, appearance investment, and watching TV. While TV and body dissatisfaction was what made women actually contemplate having cosmetic surgery. This study shows that TV had a real impact on how women think about cosmetic surgery and procedures

Television and advertising of cosmetic products and procedures promote the idea of changing one's appearance, there are other ways that television and advertising is used to promote an ageist belief. It is commonplace to see younger more conventionally attractive individuals in advertisements, whether the advertisement is about skin care or not. With the lack of appearances of older women in particular, it becomes subtly pushed to appear more younger in order to be treated fairly in society. Maria Edström (2018), examined three decades worth of the most circulated advertisements in newscasts, billboards, magazines, and television, and was

able to investigate the ratios in which younger male and female individuals appear versus older male and female individuals. The results of this study showed that in the four categories of advertisements, the ratio between gender in the younger individuals shown was almost even, however the ratio between younger individuals and older individuals was disproportionately favoring the younger individuals. The findings also show that when older individuals were shown in advertisements, often, the individual shown was an older male which furthers stereotypes around older individuals, specifically older women (Edström, 2018). Older women are less likely to appear in advertisements, which leads to people thinking older women are less valuable to society overall.

The advertising of cosmetic procedures and products is greatly influenced by the normalization and prominence of ageist ideas and beliefs. This can be seen within the actors and actresses included within media and advertisements whether the content is or not about cosmetics. Advertising is one of the overarching influences on older women to undergo cosmetic surgery.

Outside Influences on Women's Opinions

Advertisements are a small portion of the influences that affect older women's opinions on cosmetic procedures and products and their relation to their appearance. The influences that encourage women to undergo cosmetic procedures or surgeries can be found in many different aspects of society. There are many influences and motives that encourage women to undergo cosmetic procedures, specifically variables related to body dissatisfaction, appearance investment, aging anxiety (Slevec & Tiggemann, 2010), workplace agism (Clarke & Griffin, 2008), social exclusion (Clarke, 2018), culture, personal motives (Chrisler et.al, 2012), and social media. There are personal motives and reasons that may cause a woman to desire

undergoing a cosmetic surgery or procedure, at the same time there are external influences and outside pressures that can influence one's desire to undergo a cosmetic procedure.

One of the common variables that influenced ideas of body dissatisfaction, appearance investment, and aging anxiety was media, including television and magazines (Slevec & Tiggemann, 2010). Oftentimes the media and advertisements that portray individuals exclude older women and it is more common to see young women and men (Edström, 2018). With these forms of media, they construct the beauty standard of being young and non-aged specifically for women. There is also an influence of the workplace that encourages a desire to undergo cosmetic procedures (Clarke & Griffin, 2008). The preexisting ageist stigma of competence that is attached to looking young (Cecil et.al., 2022), especially within a workplace environment where sexist beliefs tied to competence are already present (Clarke & Griffin, 2008), furthers the desire to remain seen as competent and capable.

Social exclusion due to age, or appearance of age affects older women more than it does for older men. A woman's appearance, her perceived age, and perceived physical attractiveness determines how she is valued by others, the opportunities available to her, and relationships with others (Clarke, 2018). Especially in western culture where it has become commonplace to turn to surgical culture to alter or "improve" an individual's experience (Elliot, 2008). Going along with social exclusion, it is often expected for women of middle and upper class to undergo these procedures in order to pass as younger than their actual age (Chrisler et.al., 2012). In turn, undergoing these procedures will result in a connotation of higher social class.

With several influences being discussed, aging anxiety, body dissatisfaction, social exclusion, personal motives and social media, it is clear that many aspects contribute towards ageism as well as the desire to undergo cosmetic procedures in order to alter or change one's

appearance. One influence that has gained more prevalence recently is social media, and how the language and content found within perpetuates ageist stigma.

Social Media Influence

With the COVID-19 pandemic there has been a rise of ageist beliefs towards the older members of a society. Social media is a major influence on the opinions and beliefs of individuals in a society, with the wide variety of information, conversations, and discourse so easily available to most of the general public. Focusing on social media within the context of ageism and ageist beliefs, it is crucial to discuss these contexts with the perspective of the COVID-19 pandemic and how that has affected opinions and values surrounding older individuals.

With older individuals already being deemed at “at-risk” population (Smirnova, 2012), this was furthered by using age to classify a group with a higher risk of contracting COVID-19 (Raham & Jahan, 2020). With social media influencing this idea of an “at risk” population of older individuals it has led to mass misperceptions of the pandemic as well as creating an area of social exclusion for older individuals (Raham & Jahan, 2020). This belief of older individuals being sorted into a different social category as well as being excluded, there is a link created between the language used on social media (Makita et. al., 2021) and the exclusionary factors that older women face based on their appearance (Clarke, 2018).

Social media has become an incredibly important means for communication that requires topics and content to be documented and observed especially in regards to the language used surrounding older individuals, this language being used creating the negative connotation of older adults being vulnerable and disempowered (Makita et. al., 2021). Social media, specifically twitter, reinforces preexisting ageist beliefs. The ageist language found on Twitter also contained

the belief that aging itself is something to be prevented or disguised (Makita et. al., 2021).

Whether that is shown through negatively addressing an individual's appearance, or referring to visible signs of aging as unsightly or unlikeable. This rhetoric and language can be seen in other forms of media such as magazines and magazine advertisements (Smirnova, 2012).

There has been research done that analyzes the connection between social media and the depiction of unrealistic beauty standards, looking at research done between 2021 and 2022 shows a clear connection between negative appearance evaluation, body image concerns and social media use (Rice, 2022). This type of social media usage is called appearance focused social media use and is connected directly to body dissatisfaction and appearance comparison. These concepts are shown to correlate to one's desire to undergo cosmetic surgery and the acceptance of cosmetic surgery (Watson, 2022). Social media does breach a large range of demographics, but each can be influenced by opinions and beliefs perpetuated by social media and its users.

Being designated as an at-risk population and the language being used which perpetuates stereotypes and stigmas towards aging and making aging out to be something that must be prevented or disguised are all variables that contribute to outside influences on older women and the potential desire to undergo cosmetic surgeries or procedures.

Methods

The subtopics in the previous research show there is a connection between several outside influences, advertising, social media, and interpersonal interactions, that can influence women's opinions to undergo cosmetic procedures. These influences paired with the overarching concept and influence of ageism, focusing the research to be conducted on women over the age of 45 allowed for insight to lived experiences from the participants.

Participants

This study investigated the influences that shape the ideas in women over the age of 45 on undergoing cosmetic surgery and procedures, and the influences that shape broader societal opinions on older women and visible signs of aging in older women. Women are encouraged and expected to mask and camouflage signs of aging at any age at which the signs begin to appear. Taking into consideration how wrinkles and signs of aging can be considered something that can be cured, and something that can create an “at-risk” population (Bayer, 2005). Accordingly, this study includes a population in which visible signs of aging are likely to be prevalent. In this study participants consisted of women ages 45 and up, even though visible signs of age vary by age from person to person. All research done with participants, surveys and interviews, has been approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). The participants in the interviews were subjects found through familial connections and snowball sampling, while the participants for the survey were found through social media as well as snowball sampling. Consent from both the interviewees and survey participants was gained prior to participation in both respective forms of data collection and was capable of being revoked at any time during the process.

Interviews

Interview questions were designed in order to gain insight about participants’ thoughts, opinions, and experiences in regards to ageism, cosmetics, and cosmetic procedures. The questions asked were designed to avoid negative suggestions about age, and to not receive a defensive, offended or negative response. The participants in the interview were sent a consent form beforehand, which explained the study, the ability to withdraw, and the assurance of anonymity. The participants held the ability to withdraw from the interview at any time and held the option to decline to answer any and all questions. Interviews were recorded and transcribed

using the software Otter.io and tagged accordingly using the software Taguette. In total there were five interview participants.

The interviews were conducted online and the participants were assigned numbers and pseudonyms in order to maintain confidentiality and anonymity. The questions touched on concepts of appearance based ageism, opinions on undergoing cosmetic procedures or other women undergoing cosmetic procedures, lived experiences in an aged body, and bias based on previous experiences and circumstances.

Surveys

The questions within the survey were designed in order to gain insight about survey participants' thoughts, opinions, and experiences in regards to ageism, cosmetic products and cosmetic procedures. The questions asked were designed to avoid negative suggestions about age, and to not receive a defensive, negative, or offended response. In order for the participants to take the survey, the consent form which explained the study, the ability to withdraw, and the assurance of anonymity, must've been read before accessing the questions. The consent form was connected to a question that granted access to the survey questions. The participants held the ability to withdraw from the survey at any time and held the option to decline to answer any and all questions.

The survey was spread through the social media platforms Instagram and Facebook. The link to the survey was provided within the post. The participants were required to give consent to data being collected before gaining access to the survey. The questions in the survey touched on concepts of appearance based ageism, the likelihood to undergo a cosmetic surgery or procedure, previous experiences with cosmetic surgeries and procedures. The survey was accessible via the link for about two months between mid December to mid February garnering a total of 100 total

survey responses. The survey questions were optional, which created percentages and responses that don't total to the full 100 participants within the survey.

Findings

With the question of understanding underlying motives for older women to undergo cosmetic surgeries and procedures and the treatment thereof, the data collected provides insight from 100 survey participants and 4 interviewees. Within the data it shows the likelihood to undergo cosmetic procedures or processes, how many individuals have undergone or have considered undergoing these processes, and specific instances where appearance was a factor in one's treatment by others.

Quantitative Data

Before discussing the survey findings, it is important to note that all of the questions present in the survey were not required, besides the giving of consent to participate, which has in turn caused some of the questions to have less than 100 total responses. The race demographic of the survey participants was 99% identifying as white, with this specific race demographic, the responses are showing quite the specific racial experience as well which can affect the data collected. The age demographic of this study was women over the age of 45, the average age for this sample group was 47 years old.

Do you feel as though you are treated differently due to your age in relation to others?

99 responses

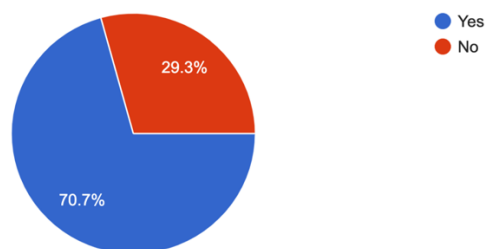


Figure 1.

This chart shows that 70.7% of women who participated in this survey confirm that they believe that they are treated differently based on their age. This was also a common theme found within the interviews as well, with each of the interview participants including details of instances that they had experienced different treatment by others, being seen as just an old woman, or being judged as less useful based solely on their age.

Do you feel the need to cover up or get rid of signs of age? For example, wrinkles, gray hair, etc.?

99 responses

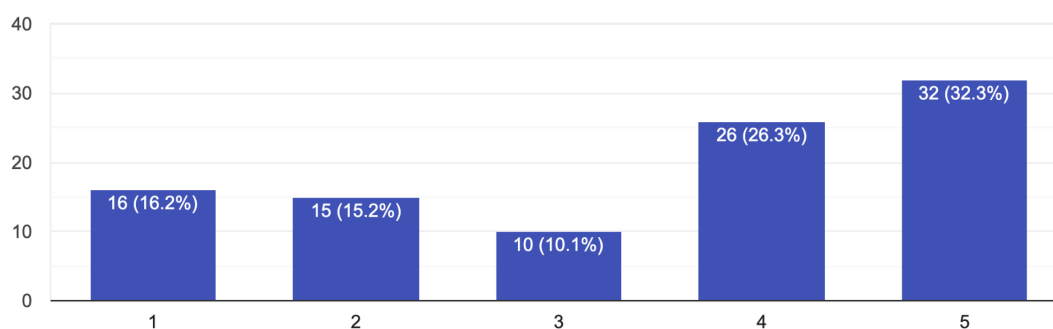


Figure 2.

This question in the survey was also similar to a question asked in the interviews and the results from both hold similar responses. Looking at the percentages within the question, with the highest being 32.3% fully agreeing with their feeling of need to cover up signs of age.

Comparing the results of this figure with the results of figure 1, a correlation can be made between the amount of individuals who have confirmed to be treated differently based on their age and the 58 individuals who are more likely to cover up visible signs of age.

The survey also discusses cosmetic usage and undergoing procedures and the likeness in which the individual is going to purchase or utilize these procedures and products. With the 100

survey participants, only 22% of individuals have undergone a cosmetic procedure such as BOTOX or fillers, leaving 77% of survey participants who have not undergone a medical cosmetic procedure. When asked which products or procedures they have considered using or undergoing, it did reflect on the percentages previously discussed.

Have you ever considered undergoing a cosmetic procedure, either surgical or non-surgical? Please indicate which procedure or products

91 responses

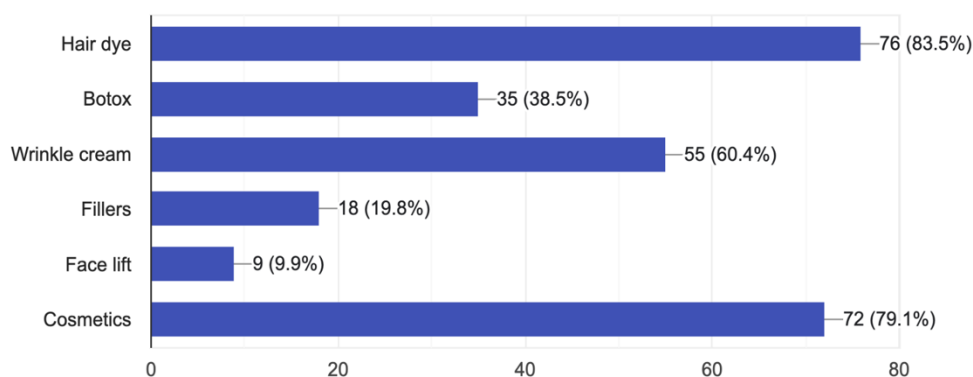


Figure 3.

Within the results to this question, there is a clear divide between using surgical v.s. Non surgical cosmetic products and procedures. The two most considered non surgical procedures are using hair dye with 83.5%, and Cosmetics with 79.1%. Compared to the consideration of surgical procedures, only 38.5% of individuals indicated that they had considered BOTOX, with the other two options, fillers 19.8% of individuals and a face lift 9.9% of individuals. Seeing the consideration of surgical cosmetic procedures be the minority within these responses compared to non surgical procedures, it is mirrored within other sections within the survey as well.

Are you planning on purchasing cosmetic products in the future?

99 responses

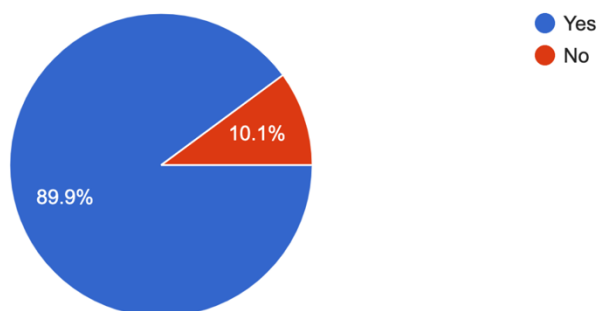


Figure 4.

This chart is representative of the further consideration and planning of the survey participants to purchase cosmetic products, such as wrinkle cream, general cosmetics, and hair dye. With 89.9% of survey participants confirming that they would purchase cosmetic items in the future, it is confirmed with the following responses with the likelihood to buy each product. With 41.8% of participants being most likely to buy hair hair dye, 58.2% to buy and use cosmetics, and 41.4% to buy and use wrinkle creams. Comparing these responses to the question of undergoing medical or surgical cosmetic procedures in figure 5 there is a clear difference.

Are you planning on undergoing a cosmetic procedure in the future?

100 responses

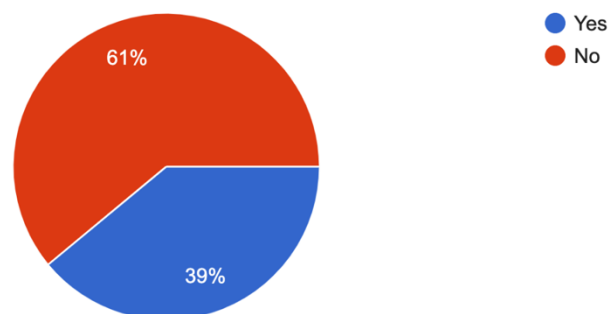


Figure 5.

This chart represents the percentages of women who would undergo or are planning to undergo a cosmetic procedure such as BOTOX, fillers, or a face lift. With 61% of individuals responding that they do not have a plan to undergo such procedures it can also be seen within the following responses. When asked what procedures individuals were planning on undergoing, the majority of the responses were said to be unlikely for each procedure, with BOTOX having 45% of individuals stating it was unlikely, fillers with 62.45% unlikely, and facelift having the most with 84.8% unlikely.

After discussing the survey data along with the charts and graphs, connections can be made based on the data provided. This survey showed that women over the age of 45 do believe that they are treated differently based on their age in relation to others, and that they feel that signs of age should be covered up. When discussing ways in which the survey participants would cover up signs of age, non-surgical procedures were shown to be much more likely for these women to use and undergo, this includes hair dye, wrinkle creams, and cosmetics. With this numerical data gathered from the surveys, the more descriptive questions as well as the interviews provide more insight on these topics as well as connections between each concept.

Qualitative Data

Within the survey there were three open-ended response questions, one to identify an instance of when they were treated differently based on age, if they had undergone cosmetic procedures, was the treatment towards them any different, and the different brands or types or cosmetics that they have purchased in the past. When asked of a specific scenario in which they had experienced different treatment in regard to the individual's age, only 16 individuals had specified that they had not experienced any different treatment compared to 25 who simply

agreed that they had been treated differently. The more prominent concepts discussed in the responses were assumed age, appearance, and treatment in the workplace. When discussing these responses, it must be considered that all the responses to the question about different treatment based on age all fall under the category of ageism. As discussed before, ageism is a societally constructed mechanism that is used to justify the unjust treatment and oppression of older people (Overall, 2006). With all the responses addressing this concept it is valuable to address the different facets of this overarching topic. Going along with assumed age, many women discussed being offered assistance, “more people are coming up to me and offering assistance or help with tasks when I am doing just fine” one survey participant answered. The answers addressing being offered assistance also included the concept of capability or competence as how an individual appears and how their age is assumed has been shown to affect how that individual is treated by others. This also has been seen to affect treatment in the workplace towards the survey participants. One participant emphasized that they often get told “you should be retired by now” but counter that statement by discussing that they are still competent at what their job is asking of them. With the competence aspect of treatment within the workplace, there is a trend of having an individual's younger coworkers be asked for help instead of the survey participant. The responses regarding the treatment the individual faced after undergoing a cosmetic procedure were not very many, considering what is represented in Figure 5 with the percentages of women considering or planning to undergo cosmetic surgeries being only 39%, that is represented within the number of responses.

The data collected from the survey participants showed that the majority of women (70.7%) confirmed that they are treated differently because of their age, something that was also shown with the long-answer responses on prior incidents of ageism. The data also showed that

the majority of survey participants felt the need to cover up signs of age, and that non-surgical cosmetic procedures are more likely to be used. With non-surgical procedures being more likely, 89.9% of survey participants will purchase cosmetic products in the future, with the most prominent being hair dye and cosmetics.

There were four total interviewees, with an age range from 47 to 72 years old. Similar to the demographic present in the surveys each of the interview participants identified as white. The more prominent themes found within the interview responses were body dissatisfaction, media and advertising, and normalized instances of ageism toward the participants.

One of the more prominent concepts discussed within the interviews was body dissatisfaction. Similar to appearance and being self conscious, body dissatisfaction emphasizes the individual's dislike or dissatisfaction about specific aspects of their body. Several of the interview participants discussed their focus on and distaste for their wrinkles with a potential motivation to change their appearance, "It would be wonderful to be able to just tweak something, but I want it to be magical like no surgery and if I decide I don't look like myself with a nose that I've just magically created with fairy dust and a scalpel". This response emphasizes the presence of the desire to undergo cosmetic surgeries based on unsatisfactory elements about an individual's body.

The emphasis on advertising and media was a concept that was discussed in a negative sense within the context of the research. When asked the question about the factors that could influence the desire to mask signs of aging, one of the participants stated that "we're fed a steady diet... You can't be you can't get old you have to watch all this stuff about how your body you can be active", she also discussed commercials, billboards, and internet advertisements that revolve around changing how your body looks. When asked if they had ever purchased a

cosmetic item or considered a cosmetic procedure after seeing an advertisement for it, the interviewee's listed several sources of advertising and media. These sources being Instagram, internet articles, television, and billboards. With the appearance of many diverse ways advertising cosmetic products and procedures, it has the potential to contribute to aspects of appearance anxiety and body dissatisfaction. Another response from a different interviewee shows more of this connection, "I don't even like to look at those things. I think it's unnatural. I think that's why I don't have TV. I don't want to hear. I'm feeling okay. And then someone tells me that, you know, I need to change something... it's depressing to hear it". Despite not consuming television commercials or shows, after hearing or seeing advertisements on changing an individual's appearance, it can still bring one's confidence and body satisfaction down.

As stated above, each of these themes and categories fall under the category of ageism but the interviews focus on how normalized and ingrained it is into individuals' experiences and thought processes, so it is useful to consider it under the category of normalized. This was shown based on the experiences described within the workplace, out in public, and other circumstances. A prominent aspect of normalized ageism can be seen within the language surrounding older individuals, "the word old lady when they're someone who's getting older. You know, there was this old lady that was hit by a car, there was this old lady. What's the age that would become an old lady?". Multiple of the interview participants emphasized the use of language surrounding them and other women, being called "ma'am", the nickname "work mom" by their younger coworkers, and being seen as an "old lady" as previously mentioned. With the wording of "old lady", the gender aspect commonly found within normalized ageism towards older women, one participant called attention to being treated as helpless within a public setting "People offer to help me more, like in the stores I have been offered help when I'm browsing as if I can't find

things for myself. I understand the offer of being helpful but at the same time I do find it a bit insulting, maybe it's because I'm a woman? Maybe it's because I'm an older woman?". The interview responses also brought attention to normalized thought processes that create a negative focus on other women's appearance, "sometimes if there's someone who's not pencil thin in the movie. I'm judging them because I've been so used to seeing what they're supposed to look like and I think oh my God, what an awful thing to do". Although this thought process is not discreetly ageist, it is bringing attention to individuals' beliefs and opinions being shaped by the media about other women.

Looking at both forms of data collected and discussed, there were clear trends and concepts present in both: appearance anxiety, normalized and gendered ageism, and media consumed by the participants. Normalized ageism was a topic that was seen in many of the responses received through the survey and interview participants, mentioned in the workplace. Nicknames given to older women and within the media consumed by either the participant or mentioned in passing. Underneath the umbrella of Normalized ageism, gendered ageism is also very present in the participants responses, mentioning disparities between the ways older males and older females are allowed to age, and the basis of this study focusing on older women. The media mentioned within the survey and interview responses were advertisements, TV shows, and social media influencers, all mentioned in the context of negatively influencing body image or supporting an unrealistic beauty ideal. Normalized ageism, gendered ageism, and media are linked to the concept of appearance anxiety seen in the responses to the surveys and the interviews. Appearance anxiety can be seen in the responses mentioning negative opinions on one's appearance, the desire to cover up signs of age, and being dissatisfied with one's appearance.

Analysis

Normalized Ageism

The concept of normalized ageism is apparent in a large portion of the literature used in the paper, as well as being discussed in the data collected. Despite being shown and discussed within the data, it is beneficial to address this theme within the context of the data and the literature. This section discusses workplace ageism, social exclusion based on age, and assumed age. A more general concept in ageism is viewing older age and an older appearance as being an impaired state or something to be considered at risk (Smirnova, 2012), as well as one of the main principles of ageism is it being a socially constructed system used to justify the treatment and oppression of older individuals (Overall, 2006). These two principles are apparent within the data collected, specifically from the survey responses. A quarter of the responses collected to the question “Has there been a specific instance where you have experienced different treatment based on your age in relation to others?” were affirmative but followed the pattern of not remembering a specific instance as it happens frequently or it has become normal for the participant.

Many of the incidents cited as a response to this question fell under workplace ageism. With the ageist stigma existing between the appearance of age and competence (Cecil et.al., 2022), the workplace can incite desire to undergo procedures or surgeries in order to appear capable and competent (Clarke & Griffin, 2008). An interviewee, a 72 year old woman, when asked about the feeling of being placed into a separate social category spoke about her experiences within her workplace. “Oh yes, I do. ‘You want to go to senior citizens' homes now?’, ‘You should retire’ why? My brain is still active. What should I be doing?...I want to go to work. I like to go to work. I like to be with people. I'd like to keep my mind active and if I'm

the old lady in the group, so be it”. The concept of being if one would want to be placed into a senior care facility, or if one would like to retire instead of work are both tied into ageism as well as the idea of competency declining as an individual ages (Cecil et.al., 2022). This can be tied in with not covering up signs of age that leads to being treated differently based on one's age. A survey participant stated the difference in treatment that she had received after undergoing certain procedures “I have not had a permanent cosmetic procedure. I have had transitory ones - brows dyed, hair dyed, lymphatic facials that slim and lift the face. I find the more trouble I take, the more politely I am treated”. This example supports how appearance is linked to how individuals are treated by others.

With different treatment based on age within the workplace, oftentimes individuals will experience treatment based on the age the other assumes they are. These can be seen with forms of exclusion, being offered assistance, or being seen as older than one is based on visible signs of aging. An interviewee discusses how she had experienced an incidence of assumed age, “very recently, today at the grocery store I was asked if I wanted the senior discount, which is for 55 and up so I was assumed to be older than 46”, although this instance may appear minimal it does still carry and emphasize the impact of a woman's age and appearance on the treatment received by others.

Gendered Ageism

The concept of gendered ageism is one of the central foci of this research, with the demographic being older women, which is also represented within the literature and the data collected. Falling under the category of normalized ageism, the specificity based on one's gender identity is very apparent within the findings. Tying into normalized ageism, one of the prominent themes within gendered ageism is when women have the appearance of aging or looking aged is

linked to competence as well as social standing (Clarke, 2018), as well as a woman's appearance, age, and attractiveness being factors that determine her value to others, opportunities available, and her relationships with others (Clarke, 2018), gender is a large factor in considering ageism towards older individuals, especially older women. Within the findings, there were many instances of situations or treatment that may be overlooked by others. One, in particular, was several women calling attention to their distaste of being referred to as “Ma’am” as they perceive it as being disrespectful and an indicator of age. One variable that is worth drawing light on is that the survey and interview participants are native to the northeast of the United States, as opposed to the South where being referred to as ma’am is perceived as casual.

A trend that appeared within the data that can be contextualized within the urge to undergo or use cosmetic procedures or products was attractiveness and sex appeal. With a woman's appearance, age, and attractiveness already contributing to major factors in her life such as her value, opportunities, and relationships romantic and otherwise (Clarke, 2018), having this concept be discussed with two of the interviewee participants furthers the distinction of the gendered aspect. One interviewee related to her personal experience “The fact that the person that I'm interested in right now that I've been spending time with is younger than me it's also coming in to focus to where I'm like, if we're out together, do people look at me and go, Dude, she's a hag, she's old”, this experience, in particular, emphasizes the desirability of a woman is dependent on her appearance and perceived age.

With both concepts being discussed within the umbrella of gendered ageism, the concept and influence of gender needs to be looked at. In both day-to-day scenarios as well as media, it is more common to see an older male individual instead of an older woman which furthers the stereotypes about older women (Edström, 2018). One interview participant discusses the

disparities within these beliefs, "...it's pressure from society because we're not allowed to age, dudes are allowed to get fat and get gray hair. We have to keep up with one image because that's the image that makes the money, that's the image that is aesthetically pleasing". This quote calls attention towards the societally pushed responsibility on older women to look at specific ways through these procedures or using cosmetic products. Going back to women having a distaste for being referred to as titles such as "ma'am", the labels given to older men such as "silver fox" exemplify the difference of how aging is seen between these two genders. Women aging and showing signs of age has been portrayed in a negative light, while the opposite is shown for men, such disparities can cause issues with appearance satisfaction as well as anxiety.

Appearance Anxiety

One overarching theme that correlates to both the data collected between the interviews and surveys and the literature was appearance anxiety. This concept contains ideas of body dissatisfaction, visible aging, the assumption of age, and self-consciousness. As mentioned before, body dissatisfaction relates to dislike and dissatisfaction about factors of an individual's body and appearance. One study done in 2010, on the variables and influences on women's body ideals, shows that one of the common variables that influenced ideas of body dissatisfaction, appearance investment, and aging anxiety was media, including television and magazines (Slevec & Tiggemann, 2010). As also shown within the interviews, with one participant stating, "I do believe these women who choose to undergo them (cosmetic procedures) are not satisfied with their appearance", with advertisements and media showing individuals who have undergone cosmetic procedures or products it pushes the influence of looking a certain way which in turn will affect individuals satisfaction with their own appearance. Both appearance anxiety as well as body dissatisfaction contribute to one another, both can be apparent in covering up wrinkles or

gray hair, or focusing on one's appearance and what can be changed or what can look different about one's appearance.

Along with appearance anxiety, there is also an aspect of an individual's age being assumed based on appearance, and that influence on appearance anxiety. How women's age is perceived is a major factor in how women are valued by others, their attractiveness and their appearance determine that individuals value and relationships with others (Clarke, 2018). This concept can also be paired with having the visible appearance of aging being linked with competence, social class, and attractiveness (Clarke 2018). The idea of age being linked to competence was apparent within the survey responses as well as in the interviews, commonly seen with being offered assistance while in public, "People offer to help me more, like in the stores I have been offered help when I'm browsing as if I can't find things for myself. I understand the offer of being helpful but at the same time I do find it a bit insulting, maybe it's because I'm a woman? Maybe it's because I'm an older woman? Whatever that means". Looking back at the interview participant that discussed being offered the senior discount when grocery shopping, shows that assuming an individual's age is not uncommon and can occur in many different situations.

The concepts falling under the category of appearance anxiety all deal with aspects of visible aging and the effects on the individual. Looking back at the data collected within figure 2, with 58.6% of the survey participants being more likely to cover up signs of age, visible aging is something that is not seen as desired. Appearance anxiety and body dissatisfaction is causing women to turn to the surgical culture of cosmetic procedures to achieve either appearance renewal or reinvention (Elliot, 2008). These responses may have been given within the confines

of self-consciousness about one's appearance, but there is always a root cause which can either be due to treatment from others or from advertisements and media.

Advertising and Media

Similar to the subtopic in the literature review of this paper, social media and advertising of cosmetics or procedures is a theme shown within the findings. With the consideration of cosmetic surgery already having a proven link to media exposure and body dissatisfaction (Slevec & Tiggemann, 2010), multiple participants in the interviews, as well as the surveys, have brought up the concepts and influence of advertising, social media, and celebrities on their consideration or opinions on cosmetic surgeries and procedures. With the concept of successful and failed aging, there is another form of media product aging called "positive aging". This idea is meant to represent the benefits of aging and not to portray aging in a negative light, however, it has become synonymous with looking youthful and contributes to anti-aging ideals (Bayer, 2005), similar to when an individual exhibits signs of age it is considered "failed aging" (Cecil et.al., 2022). This rhetoric appears to be furthered by advertising cosmetic procedures or products as well as celebrities either being included within the advertising or undergoing these procedures themselves. One participant spoke on their opinions of celebrities within the interviews, "You know I see all these ads or posts, the celebrities with the skin tight dresses and the faces that look like they're being pulled back, some of these actresses I've grown up with and seen throughout all the films and movies or shows that they've been in and it's just not natural to have a 60-year-old look younger than me you know?". With actresses specifically, it has become commonplace to not see wrinkles or signs of age on most older women in media whether that be in movies and television or advertising. Instead, "positive aging" is more prominent in media, such as advertisements and commercials, thus mainstream media denotes aging or older women

are not desirable or interesting enough to be publicized (Edström, 2018). With advertising, there is also a gender bias present on what genders are shown and at what they are shown up until. This study's focus is on that of the influences on older women, in a study done in 2018, it showed that more often than not, when an older individual was shown in advertisements it was an older male (Edström, 2018). Besides advertising, there are many other forms of media that influence and shape individuals' opinions and bias', the biggest one being social media. As social media became an incredibly important and fast means for communication, the language used surrounding older individuals is creating a negative connotation of older adults being vulnerable and disempowered (Makita et. al., 2021). Twitter specifically, and the language found within tweets, reinforces preexisting ageist beliefs as well as making age out to be something that should be disguised or covered up (Makita et. al., 2021). One participant, in regards to a social media account showing the before and after of retouched images and cosmetic surgeries, said "That person is not that picture is not a person. That person is completely artificial". While the term artificial carries a different meaning in some scenarios, with the surgeries and photo retouching, social media has become a hub for widespread appearance altering. The usage of social media in such a way has been coined "appearance focused" social media use, this has been shown to be connected to body dissatisfaction, appearance comparison, and cosmetic surgery consideration (Watson, 2022). With this social media use already proven to influence individuals body dissatisfaction and appearance ideals, paired with how it was spoken on negatively within the interviews and surveys, there is a clear connection between older women's appearance anxieties as well as social media.

Cosmetic Usage

The findings from this research highlight the usage of cosmetics and cosmetic procedures within the research participants. The cosmetic procedures and products discussed within the interviews and surveys include makeup, wrinkle cream, eye cream, BOTOX, fillers, and hair dye. Looking at the trend of women who have purchased cosmetics in the past and women who will use them again shows a clear line of being connected to one another. When asked which cosmetic products individuals used, 53 participants responded makeup, 34 said face cream, 35 said eye cream, and 16 participants said wrinkle cream. A few participants brought up the product retinol, a cosmeceutical that can be found in creams, lotions, and serums. It is advertised to clear pores and diminish wrinkles to reduce signs of aging. The rhetoric as well as the naming of cosmetics implies medical benefits from their use as well as creating the idea that there is a cure for old age. A study done in 2012, looking at 124 advertisements of cosmetics and cosmeceuticals, found three major themes within these advertisements, the promise of eternal youth, trust that science has ‘magic’ qualities, and having a desire to look younger (Smirnova, 2012). This concept does also fall under the category of advertising, but it emphasizes the influence of language and cosmetics on individuals.

The analysis of the data through the context of normalized ageism, gendered ageism, appearance anxiety, advertising and media, as well as the usage of cosmetics by the survey participants, brings attention to the main themes found in the data as well as the supporting literature. Normalized ageism was shown through ageism in the workplace, being called “work mom” or individuals relying on younger coworkers instead of older workers. These instances of ageism in the workplace also contain other concepts such as social exclusion based on one’s age as well as assuming an individual’s age and basing treatment on how that individual is perceived. Within normalized ageism also comes gendered ageism, something seen within the research as

the central focus was on older women. This can be seen with a woman's appearance and age determining how she is treated and perceived by others. Something seen in both normalized and gendered ageism is how competence is linked to age and appearance, as when a woman shows visible signs of aging she is seen as less competent. This is also linked to workplace ageism as younger workers are seen as more competent and capable, therefore creating the disparity between younger and older workers. Gendered ageism gives way to appearance anxiety, seen mainly in women, it contains ideas of body dissatisfaction and self-consciousness. These ideas are perpetuated by advertising and media. This is due to the influence of cosmetic advertisements to cover up visible signs of age, celebrities, and social media influencers undergoing cosmetic procedures to look younger and support the conventional ideal of beauty. Each of these topics found within the research can be linked to one another underneath the category of ageism and how each of these contribute to and perpetuate ageist stereotypes.

Conclusion

In a society where youth is desired and is considered the norm, the influences that older women experience cause the desire to change their appearance in order to avoid ageism or ageist treatment by others in the day-to-day become apparent when observed through the framework of the presentation of oneself. This is shown throughout the literature and the data collected, reflecting outside influences such as advertising and social media, as well as including other topics such as cosmetic usage and the normalization of cosmetic procedures and products enforcing ageist beliefs through medical rhetoric. These concepts found in both the literature and the data collected further exemplify the abundance of such concepts but also call attention to underlying opinions, biases and beliefs about older women's appearances, visible aging, and body dissatisfaction.

With a woman's competence being linked to her appearance (Cecil et. al., 2022), viewing old as a medical issue in need of a cure (Smirnova, 2012), the marketing of cosmetic items as cosmeceuticals with a perceived medical benefit (Mello, 2012), as well as media and advertisements carrying an ageist perspective on women's bodies, there is clear motivation behind undergoing procedures and using cosmetic products in order to mask or remove visible signs of aging. With appearance reinvention done by turning to surgeries and surgical culture growing more common (Elliot 2008) in response to ageist treatment that women experience (Clarke & Griffin, 2008), it is worth addressing the causes as well as the effects of ageism that is experienced by older women.

The most apparent findings within the research and data collected would be normalized ageism, gendered ageism, appearance anxiety and assumed age, and advertising and media. With normalized ageism, the ideas of competence being linked with an older woman's appearance, as well as being expected to alter one's appearance as they age to avoid showing physical signs of age or aging were both very apparent within the responses in both the interviews and the surveys. Workplace ageism was also apparent, this ties into both normalized and gendered ageism, being ignored or experiencing the feeling of exclusion or lack of value to the workplace as interview and survey participants expressed exemplifies the treatment that older women face. Along with gendered ageism, within advertisements and other forms of media, it is more common to see older men than older women. This in particular plays into the stigma that men retain competence and become “wiser” or a “silver fox” when they show visible signs of age, with the inverse having women cover up and mask these changes. With advertising and media, it creates “appearance-focused” social media use, which furthers body dissatisfaction and anxiety in regard to the appearance of age.

This study provides insight into a demographic and the influences that cause the desire to change or to conform to a societal ideal. Along with this insight, it allows for introspection on any influences that have had a personal effect. This research helps to see and discuss unseen or unthought-of effects of advertising and media, and the harmful effects on and the impact on ageism towards older women. The future of this topic has the potential for a change or a movement away from the more harmful ideals and to become more inclusive for older individuals and in turn, embrace aging instead of trying to cover or alter it. With this potential in mind, there is the potential for no change. With the prior research, discussions, and discourse done in relation to ageism and cosmetic procedures and the lack of change, it may stay the same. Despite the potential outcomes, there is much more to discuss and research within the concept of ageism and the stigmas surrounding age and the influences thereof.

Bibliography

- Bayer, K. (2005). Cosmetic Surgery and Cosmetics: Redefining the Appearance of Age. *Generations: Journal of the American Society on Aging*, 29(3), 12–18.
- Blau, J. A., Levites, H. A., Phillips, B. T., & Hollenbeck, S. T. (2020). Patient demand for plastic surgeons for every US state based on Google searches. *JPRAS Open*, 25, 88–92. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jptra.2020.06.001>
- Cecil, V., Pendry, L. F., Salvatore, J., Mycroft, H., & Kurz, T. (2022). Gendered ageism and gray hair: Must older women choose between feeling authentic and looking competent? *Journal of Women & Aging*, 34(2), 210–225. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08952841.2021.1899744>
- Chrisler, J. C., Gorman, J. A., Serra, K. E., & Chapman, K. R. (2012). Facing Up to Aging: Mid-Life Women’s Attitudes toward Cosmetic Procedures. *Women & Therapy*, 35(3–4), 193–206. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02703149.2012.684540>
- Clarke, L. H. (2017). Women, Aging, and Beauty Culture: Navigating the Social Perils of Looking Old. *Generations Journal*, 41(4), 104–108.
- Clarke, L. H., & Griffin, M. (2008). Visible and invisible ageing: Beauty work as a response to ageism. *Ageing and Society*, 28(5), 653–674. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0144686X07007003>
- DeFleur, M. L. (1964). STIGMA: NOTES ON THE MANAGEMENT OF SPOILED IDENTITY. By Erving Goffman. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1963. 147 pp. Cloth, \$4.50; paper, \$1.95. *Social Forces*, 43(1), 127–128. <https://doi.org/10.1093/sf/43.1.127>

- Dumas, A., Laberge, S., & Straka, S. M. (2005). Older women's relations to bodily appearance: The embodiment of social and biological conditions of existence. *Ageing and Society*, 25(6), 883–902. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0144686X05004010>
- Edström, M. (2018). Visibility patterns of gendered ageism in the media buzz: A study of the representation of gender and age over three decades. *Feminist Media Studies*, 18(1), 77–93. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2018.1409989>
- Elliott, A. (2008). *Making the cut: How cosmetic surgery is transforming our lives*. Reaktion.
- Goffman, E. (1959). *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Doubleday.
- Makita, M., Mas-Bleda, A., Stuart, E., & Thelwall, M. (2021). Ageing, old age and older adults: A social media analysis of dominant topics and discourses. *Ageing and Society*, 41(2), 247–272. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0144686X19001016>
- Mello, S. (2012). Selling a super cosmeceutical: Contextualising risk in direct-to-consumer advertising of BOTOX® Cosmetic. *Health, Risk & Society*, 14(4), 385–398. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13698575.2012.680951>
- Overall, C. (2006). Old Age and Ageism, Impairment and Ableism: Exploring the Conceptual and Material Connections. *NWSA Journal*, 18(1), 126–137.
- Rahman, A., & Jahan, Y. (2020). Defining a 'Risk Group' and Ageism in the Era of COVID-19. *Journal of Loss and Trauma*, 25(8), 631–634. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15325024.2020.1757993>
- Rice, L. (2022). Social Media Appearance Pressures, Body Image Concerns, and Harmful Self-Objectification Processes. *Journal of Research in Gender Studies*, 12(1), 24. <https://doi.org/10.22381/JRGS12120222>

- Slevec, J., & Tiggemann, M. (2010). Attitudes Toward Cosmetic Surgery in Middle-Aged Women: Body Image, Aging Anxiety, and the Media. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 34(1), 65–74. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-6402.2009.01542.x>
- Smirnova, M. H. (2012). A will to youth: The woman's anti-aging elixir. *Social Science & Medicine*, 75(7), 1236–1243. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2012.02.061>
- Stončikaitė, I. (2019). Critical Approaches to Ageing Body Politics in the Works of Erica Jong. *Societies*, 9(2), 47. <https://doi.org/10.3390/soc9020047>
- Watson, R. (2022). Appearance-focused Social Media Use, Unrealistic Beauty Ideals, and Body Image Dissatisfaction. *Journal of Research in Gender Studies*, 12(1), 114. <https://doi.org/10.22381/JRGS12120228>