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A Cross Sectional Survey on UK Older Adult's Attitudes to Ageing, Dementia and Positive Psychology Attributes

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Statement of the Problem: Negative attitudes towards ageing are a major concern across the world. These negative stereotypes have harmful effects on individuals' health, with more evidence needed surrounding the factors that might contribute towards and alter these views. The purpose of this study was to determine if an older adult's attitude towards dementia, their belief in a just world and sense of coherence is associated with their attitudes to ageing. The association between other factors, such as demographics and retirement status, were also considered within these relationships. Methodology: A 25-min online survey was completed by 2,675 current United Kingdom (UK) residents aged 50 or over. Questions included demographics, overall health, dementia carer, dementia relative status and retirement status. The standardised scales used were the Attitudes to Ageing Questionnaire (AAQ), Dementia Attitudes Scale (DAS), Just World Scale (JWS) and Sense of Coherence Scale-13 (SOC). Data was analysed with descriptive, two-tailed bivariate Pearson's correlations, simple, and hierarchical regression analyses. Findings: Attitudes to dementia, just world beliefs, and sense of coherence were all significantly positively correlated with AAQ-Total, with the SOC sub-scale "Meaningfulness" showing the strongest correlation. In a hierarchical regression model, higher scores on SOC-Meaningfulness, DAS-Total and belief in a just world for oneself all predicted more positive attitudes to ageing. Conclusion & Significance: The more positive an individual's attitude to dementia and the stronger their belief that the world is a just and coherent place, the more likely they are to have positive attitudes to ageing. This initial evidence helps create a greater understanding of the factors that drive attitudes and stigma and may have implications for future public health messaging.

Biography

Madeleine Thelu is a fourth-year medical student studying at the University of Nottingham. She has achieved a first in her BMedSci and is working towards her BMBS. Her work looks at older adult's attitudes to ageing.

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