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Recognition and elimination of the stigma associated with aging among Canadian physicians – preliminary findings

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Purpose: Discrimination based on age, or ‘ageism’, has been identified in the literature, but lacking are studies focusing on its related stigma and impact on aging physicians’ health, wellness, and commitment to their profession. **Methods:** National exploratory study, mixed-methods: (1) literature review; (2) key informant interviews (N=10 national stakeholder representatives); (3) consultation with Association of Faculties of Medicine of Canada committees (N=2); and (4) online survey (national representative sample, N=2000). Interview data analyzed using N-Vivo analytical software and thematic analysis. Survey data analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics, descriptive statistics and one-Way ANOVA and/or Pearson chi square analyses. **Results:** Seven (N=7) interviews; N=80 surveys to date with follow-up in Sept. 2015. Preliminary analysis suggests older physicians are viewed as experienced individuals with specialized knowledge, caretakers of the system, and valuable teachers/mentors. However, stereotypes include resistance to change, challenged to keep up with clinical advances, and road-blocking the careers of younger physicians. Younger physicians are viewed as technologically savvy with significant knowledge in emerging issues, but stereotyped as lifestyle-focused and entitled. Interview respondents suggest having greater understanding of the needs of an aging population, promoting shared-care and mentorship models, and addressing the issues around mandatory call as strategies for promoting a positive intergenerational clinical environment. Survey respondents suggest capitalizing on the generational differences, flexible work schedules, and mentorship opportunities. **Conclusions:** Preliminary data suggests stereotypes related to younger and older physicians; however, these respondents also suggest strategies for capitalizing on these differences in ways which could enhance patient care. Continuing professional development can play a role in addressing some of these intergenerational differences. **Disclosure Statement:** Canadian Physician Health Institute Special Projects Fund.