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PERCEIVED QUALITY OF LIFE AND AGEISM AMONG ELDERLY PEOPLE LIVING IN SHELTERED HOUSING AND IN THE COMMUNITY

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Introduction: Although there are studies on ageist attitudes and perceptions of quality of life (QoL) among elderly people, no publications exist that compare ageist attitudes and QoL perceptions among elderly people who live in private sector sheltered housing (PRSSH) and in the community.

Objectives: To map the differences and understand the relations between QoL and negative social perceptions of one's own age group among older adults, living in PRSSH and in the community.

Aims:

(1) To examine if there are differences in ageist attitudes and perceptions of quality of life (QoL), and

(2) to understand the role of QoL in explaining ageist attitudes among these two groups of elderly people.

Methods: The sample included 126 participants, aged 64-94, who live in PRSSH or in the community. The participants completed Fraboni et al. scale of ageism, a QoL inventory (SF-36 inventory), which provides scores on measures such as physical functioning, mental health and social functioning, and answered demographic questions.

Results: Multivariate analyses of covariance (MANCOVA) partially supported our hypotheses that elderly people who live in PRSSH will demonstrate more ageist attitudes towards people of their own age, and report a lower QoL than elderly people who live in the community.

Gender also had a distinctive effect on ageism and QoL among individuals in PRSSH. These findings were supported by regression analyses.

Conclusions: Although PRSSH may offer luxurious living conditions, the current study shows that living in an age segregated environment, may trigger negative self-perceptions of old age and decrease QoL.