

Ageism and age discrimination in mental health care in the United Kingdom: A review from the literature

Appendix 1 - Methodology

1. **Scope of the review** - a rapid literature review with its key focus on potential age discrimination in the provision of mental health services in the United Kingdom.

This review looked for evidence in the literature, of whether, and in what ways, older people are treated less favourably than younger adult users of mental health services in the United Kingdom.

The review considered whether there is evidence that specialist old people's mental health services provide a second class service and whether those mental health conditions, such as depression and dementia, experienced by older patients, are as well catered for as conditions predominantly experienced by younger patients.

The review included consideration of mental health care provision through residential care, GP services, community mental health teams, out-of-hours services, the interface between mental health services and social care and issues around mentally ill older offenders. The review looked at provision for all mental problems including dementia, anxiety, depression and psychotic disorders.

The review was mainly carried out in July, August and September 2009.

2. **Evidence of age discrimination**

To facilitate recognition of the different types of evidence presented in this review, a brief and simple classification has been used. Category labels have been added to the reference citations in the body of the text to provide an at-a-glance guide.

This does not claim to be a comprehensive and exhaustive classification of evidence but an at-a-glance rough guide to help the reader.

Large survey	Sample survey of 800+ from a large population
Survey	Sample survey of 120-800 from a large population or 50%+ from a small population. We will use the generic term <i>survey</i> to include retrospective case audits.
Small survey	Sample survey of less than 120 from a large population or less than 50% of a small population
Group study	Focus group, panel or equivalent study
Study	Individual research project, observational study or analysis not carried out as a group study or survey
Opinion	Opinion of a respected authority, editorial etc.
Systematic review	Systematic review, with or without meta analysis
Review	Literature and other reviews not structured as a 'systematic review'
Policy document	Government or professional overview
Campaign document	Document to promote a particular point of view
Guide	Guide, information pack or toolkit

3. Review process and methods

The primary focus for this review was evidence of ageism and age discrimination in mental health care drawn from within the United Kingdom except where a study had wider applicability, for example methods for determining ageist attitudes among individual mental health workers or service commissioners.

4. Literature search

Online database and journal searches.

Searches were carried out on the following general and specialist databases: Ageinfo, Ageline, Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts (ASSIA), BBC News Archive, BLEPS Catalogue, Cochrane Library, Combined Academic and National Research Library Catalogue (COPAC), Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health (CINAHL), Dissertation Abstracts, ERIC, Gerolit, Health Information Management Consortium (HMIC), International Bibliography of the Social Sciences (IBSS), ISI Web of Knowledge, Medline, National Database of Ageing Research, Psychinfo, Scirus, Social Care Online, Social Policy and Practice, Social Science Abstracts and Zetoc. Databases such as Ageinfo cover grey literature, semi-published materials such as pamphlets and reports as well as peer reviewed journal articles.

The searches of mainstream broad coverage multi-journal databases were supplemented, where possible, by searches of individual specialist journals or databases covering the content of groups of journals by the same publisher. Journals databases included Oxford Journals (including Age and Ageing) and Cambridge Journals (including Ageing and Society).

Hand scanning of key journals and citation trails

Ageism and age discrimination in the implementation of mental health services is often not referred to explicitly in journal articles and so online searching is unlikely to be comprehensive in materials located. It was necessary to supplement online searches by hand scanning of key journals, for example Age and Ageing and the Journal of Public Mental Health, plus a scan of citations in key texts already located.

5. Web searching

Searches of Google and Google Scholar, incorporate full Boolean search facilities for information professionals. General web searching was supplemented by searching and browsing of key web sites including:

- ADASS
- Age Concern and Help the Aged
- Alzheimer's Society
- Audit Commission
- Care Quality Commission
- Centre for evidence-based mental health
- Department of Health
- Depression Alliance
- EffectiveOlderPeopleCare.Org
- Kings Fund
- Mental Health Foundation
- Mental Health Wales
- Mind
- National Electronic Library for Mental Health
- NHS Information Centre
- Prison Reform Trust
- Royal College of Psychiatrists
- Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health
- SCOPE
- Social Care Institute for Excellence

6. Processing search results

Material identified by the processes above was filtered using Reference Manager and gathered into an internal database where it was assessed and rated for further review. Reference lists and bibliographies were generated from this internal database.

7. Search strategies

- A search strategy was developed to help locate materials on the various databases and on the web, but the strategy could not be applied blindly or uniformly because of restrictions in the search capabilities of each database.
- Except in the case of Ageinfo, where searching was carried out by the CPA staff who index the database, most searching was of free text fields. This maximised recall, the amount of relevant material found, but reduced precision (the proportion of initially retrieved material that is relevant). Material found not to be relevant was removed by hand.
- Because the target studies were likely either to be very small in number or not to exist at all, it was decided to adopt a series of broad based search strategies that were likely to find all related material at the expense of precision. Extraneous material was removed by hand.

8. Top level search facets

- **Age** (not to be used in specialist age related databases, Ageline, Ageinfo)
typical search terms: *older people, elderly, ageing , aging , ageism, 'age discrimination', 'age equality'*

AND

- **Mental Health Care**
(broad terms not to be used in specialist databases eg Psychinfo)
typical search terms: mental health care, mental health services, (mental health), depression, anxiety, dementia, Alzheimer*, mental disorder*, mental illness*, mental disability*, cognitive impairment*, cognitive decline, memory disorder*, confusion, delusion, speech disorder*, aphasia, perception disorder*, psychos*, psychot*, schizophrenia/ paranoi*, bipolar, bi-polar, behavioural disorder*, apathy, wandering, aggression, suicid*, neuros*, phobia*, phobic, obsessive compulsive disorder*

AND

- **Discrimination / Rationing**
typical search terms: discriminat*, ration*, ageism, inequal*, equal*, unequal*
- Search terms such as Ageism and 'Age Discrimination' combine the 'Age' and 'Discrimination' facets
- Initial search results were restricted to the past 15 years 1994-2009

9. Search strategies in practice

- A guideline general database search strategy is

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"age discrimination"; ageism; ration*; inequalit*; unequal  
AND  
"mental health"; depression; anxiety; dementia; Alzheimer*; "mental disorder";  
"mental illness"; "mental disability"; "cognitive impairment"; "cognitive decline";  
"memory disorder"; confusion; delusion; delirium; "speech disorder"; "eating disorder";  
aphasia; "perception disorder", psychos*; psychot*; schizophrenia; paranoi*; bipolar;  
bi-polar; "behavioural disorder"; apathy; wandering; aggression; suicid; neuros*;  
phobia*; phobic; "obsessive compulsive disorder"  
AND  
Year: 1994-2009
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although actual search strategies have to be varied to accommodate the available

search facilities and speciality of the database being search.

- In reality *ration** or even *rationing* as a search term produces too many ‘false drops’ and so *age based rationing* or *age* - within three words of - *rationing* produced more focussed results where proximity searching was available.
- Although searches like the ones above found much useful general and broad based material, some of the more specialised material could not be found by searches of this type.
- Many useful and relevant articles and other material do not specifically mention ageism or age discrimination but might talk about ‘age differences’ or ‘variations’ or other similar phrases which do not lend themselves to searching because of the very large number of ‘false drops’.

10. The citation trail

- In this study, more than most, general searching had to be heavily supplemented by following a ‘paper trail’ of citations from highly relevant material to other cited articles and also to other material by the same author. This process was greatly facilitated by the presence of ‘this article has been cited by’ (inverse referencing) facilities in the electronic versions of some journals.
- This approach is sometimes referred to as a ‘snowball’ method of gathering references as located references gather up other related references.

11. The search process

- The database search results were, in some cases filtered in-situ before being transferred to Reference Manager software where further filtering took place. The filtered Reference Manager results were then transferred to a common internal Cardbox database where duplicate entries were marked. All entries were scanned and rated to identify candidates for a fuller examination.
- The bibliographies and reference lists were generated from this common database.

12. Database search results

Database	Results (after filtering) and Notes
Search – Filtered – RefMan - Cardbox	
Ageinfo	42
Ageline	22
Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts (ASSIA)	26
BLEPS Catalogue	0
Cambridge journals	98
Cochrane Library	1

Combined Academic and National Research Library Catalogue (COPAC)	7
Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health (CINAHL)	8
Dissertations and Theses (Proquest)	5
ERIC	10
Gerolit	5
Google	3
Google Scholar	14
HMIC	139
Illustrata: Natural Sciences (CSA)	8
International Bibliography of the Social Sciences (IBSS)	2
ISI Web of Knowledge (Web of Science)	0
Medline/ PubMed	49
NDAR	0
Oxford Journals	93
PAIS	3
Psychinfo	15
Social Care Online	190
Social Policy and Practice	
Social Service Abstracts (CSA)	79
Sociological Abstract (CSA)	161
Westlaw	
Zetoc	0
Individually located or by following citations	239

13. The review team

- Nat Lievesley – principal author, mental healthcare and secondary healthcare reviews
- Angela Clark – principal author, primary healthcare and social care reviews
- Ruth Hayes – searches and bibliography
- Kate Jones – searches and document delivery
- Gillian Crosby – project director