

Perception of the elderly by junior high school students and university students in Poland

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Statistical data from the turn of the 20th century shows a significant increase in the average human life span and, what follows, an extension of old age. The world is aging and Poland has joined the list of countries which have been classified as demographically old since the rate at which society is aging has become very fast.

Purpose: The aim of this thesis was to become familiar with the opinions submitted by respondents regarding aging and old age, health problems connected with aging and preferred health behaviors.

Materials and methods: The research was conducted between January 3rd of 2013 and February 15th of 2014 on a group of 200 junior high school students and 200 university students

from the Medical University of Białystok Faculty of Health Sciences using a questionnaire created by the authors.

Results: A vast majority of the respondents of the study groups declared that they have thought about old age. Among university students this percentage reached 38.5%. Almost 50.0% of all respondents acknowledged that older people are needed by society.

Conclusions: The results show that the aging process should be contemplated considering multiple aspects of life: biological, psychological and social. Moreover, youth education programs about seniors and old age as well as about ways to counteract their stigmatization should be introduced.

Key words: aging, social health, students
