

Who we are

Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism is an umbrella organization that includes 16 Saskatchewan seniors' organizations which contribute to a better quality of life for seniors.

We do this by:

- researching and acting on issues affecting seniors
- being a unified voice advocating for seniors
- engaging and supporting member organizations
- partnering with member organizations and others
- creating awareness and co-ordination of resources and services for seniors

Contact Us

Media & Ageism
Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism
#112 - 2001 Cornwall Street
Regina, Saskatchewan S4P 3X9

- **Phone: (306) 359-9956**
- **Toll free 1-888-823-2211**

Office Hours: Monday to Friday, 9:30a.m. to 4:30p.m.
You can send email to ageis@skseniormechanism.ca

Media and Ageism in Saskatchewan: Creating a Culture of Inclusion



RISC
Reducing Isolation
of Seniors Collective



**Saskatchewan
Seniors
Mechanism**

Seniors Working Together

Canada 

Funded by the
Government of
Canada's New
Horizons for
Seniors Program

Media Monitoring Project

Why is ageism in media important



What it means to be an older adult is changing. Older adults have greater opportunities for :

- Longer, healthier lives;
- More active lifestyles; and
- Continued social participation.

Older adults, as a social group, are diverse and a 'one-size-fits-all' approach to reporting about this group is insufficient.

Ageism in the media is a growing concern as our population ages, and this project calls for recognition of this concern and ageism's effect on older adults.

Project Goals



This first phase of the 'Media and Ageism' project sought to:

- Uncover how older adults are portrayed in Saskatchewan media;
- Offer a glimpse into how individuals process messages delivered by media; and
- Provide guidance in challenging ageist stereotypes in all media.

Moving Forward

SSM will be working with journalists and media outlets in order to implement positive changes into the reporting of stories about or related to older adults.

A few changes that can challenge ageism are:

Language



Be cautious in language use.

- Challenge ageist attitudes by becoming aware of and avoiding stereotypical language
- Consider what older adults want to know and what is of interest to them.

Collaboration



The overall lack of representation and the often inaccurate images of aging highlight the need for collaboration.

- Changes to media reporting must begin with partnerships with advocacy groups
- Avoid the pitfalls of imposing changes without consultation
- Expand the pool of resources to invite older adults to tell their stories

Reflexivity



Honestly examine personal biases.

- Work to discover and correct any ageist tendencies in reporting.
- Report on stories that engage the interest of a wider segment of the population.

Qualitative Findings

How do people interpret news stories?

Our monitors revealed their interpretations of how media portrays older adults by reflecting on the representations of aging and other ways that media propagates stereotypes, including effort and placement of the story.

“Seniors contributions are largely unrecognized and their potential to contribute to communities under demanded.”

Constructing Images of Aging in Older Adults

News items tended to neglect “the distinction between older adults who are physically healthy and those who are not.”

Stories also tended to gloss over the reality that ageing well “is true for some adults, but not all.”

Effort and placement of the story in the newscast or within the paper— “[the article] could easily have been missed” and “so seemed less important”— gave clues to the particular way that older adults are viewed in society.

Feedback from Monitors

Many monitors clearly stated that they needed to use their comprehension skills and to read deeply into stories presented to find the relation to older adults:

- “The stories we saw tended to be very limited in scope[.]”; and
- “We had to dig deeper to get the message about seniors that they conveyed and in some cases implied.”

Project Design

Data Collection

Volunteer monitors were recruited by SSM to conduct local media monitoring studies within their communities between February 9 & 18, 2017.

News stories could be about older adults, about events or reports that directly impact older adults, or about issues that may affect older adults in some way, even though not directly acknowledged within the story

A total of thirty-nine monitors throughout South and Central Saskatchewan quantitatively coded 354 news stories (305 newspaper, forty-two television, and seven radio) and qualitatively analyzed eighteen news stories.

Research Questions

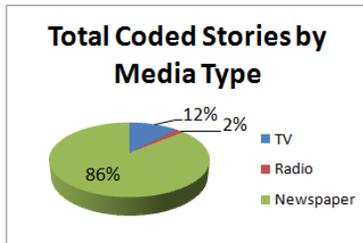
Are older adults represented in news stories on radio, television, and newspapers in Saskatchewan?

How are older adults represented?

How do people, especially older adults, interpret news stories as presented by all media?

Overall Findings

Are older adults represented in news stories?



Graph showing breakdown of coded media

Monitors coded a total of 354 news stories over the two-week monitoring period.

- 42 Television
- 305 Newspaper articles
- 7 Radio

While the total number seems like adequate representation, monitors came to different conclusions.

- “I feel that older adults were left out of consideration (...)”
- “Focus of the article was on ER security rather than the impact on the older adult.”
- “(...) there was more ignoring of seniors (...) than there was evidence of them.”
- “(...) might have been interesting to hear from some of the older adults (...) to hear what their thoughts were (...)”

How are older adults represented?

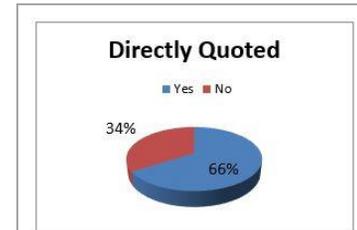
Quantitative findings pointed to a generally positive representation of adults in Saskatchewan media.

Qualitative findings were more critical:

- “The only thing about older adults (...) universally celebrated was birthdays. It was almost as if they were surprised you made it that far!”
- “(...) writing them off as incompetent and unable to navigate modern technology.”
- “What [was] this journalist’s interaction with older adults?”

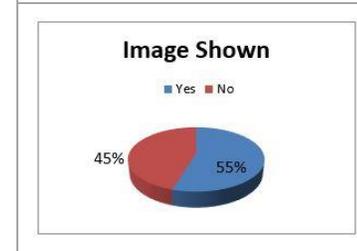
Quantitative Findings

How are older adults represented? (cont’d)



The majority of news stories of all media types that used an individual as a primary source of information directly quoted.

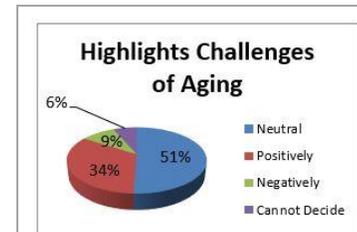
- 66% Yes
- 34% No



The majority of news stories showed the individual on camera or in a printed photograph.

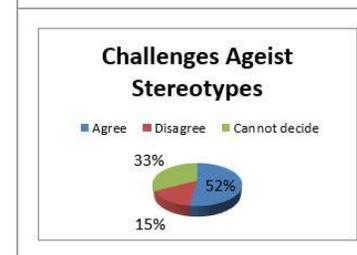
- 55% Yes
- 45% No

Overall representation of older adults



News stories were viewed as:

- 51% Neutral
- 34% Positive
- 9% Negatively portrayed the challenges of aging.



And viewed as:

- 52% Challenging stereotypes
- 15% Not challenging
- 33% Cannot decide

Overall impression of analyzed news stories