

## **Administering old age: The co-production of aging between humanistic gerontology and public administration**

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PRESENTATION FORMAT: Oral Presentation

TOPIC/TARGET AUDIENCE: Public health practitioners in the social implications of health policy

ABSTRACT: Aging is commonly perceived as one of the inescapable realities of life. Yet age is usually seen as more than the number of years lived. Every culture has certain sets of parameters that determine how aging and old age are conceptualized. These cultural expectations about aging tend to become institutionalized and generate certain normative expectations about how the aged should behave and how others such respond. These normative expectations are revealed in the discourses that are used to describe aging and the practices recommended or adopted. Public administrators and governments largely view the aged as a problem that should be managed through an administrative apparatus or through networks of service delivery agencies. However, this modernist approach places the professional or the administrator at the heart of the response to aging and reduces the aged to that of the passive recipient of welfare and services. Humanistic gerontology has long rejected these ideas but has so far failed to articulate a practical alternative. The concept of co-production offers this alternative and places the service user at the heart of the discussion. This paper explores how co-production can offer a way for humanistic gerontology to shape how age is understood and responded to.

OBJECTIVE(S): Learners will be able to evaluate and compare two different approaches towards the management of old age, namely humanistic gerontology and public administration.

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