AGE LIMITATIONS FOR PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES? EXPLORING STUDENT PERSPECTIVES USING CLASSROOM DEBATES

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Ahead of the 2020 Presidential Election, Donald Trump (age 73) and his primary opponent, Joseph Biden (age 76) received extensive criticism regarding the aptness of their candidacies based upon their current ages. While the United States Constitution requires candidates to have "attained the age of thirty-five years", no age cap for presidential candidates exists. In response to timely public discussion, undergraduate interprofessional gerontology students worked in assigned groups to prepare to debate either in favor of, or in opposition to a constitutional amendment capping the age of presidential candidates. Following classroom debates, course faculty moderated in-depth conversation examining cogent arguments made throughout the debates. After attending this session, participants will understand the logistics of planning in-class debates, moderating post-debate student discussions, and evaluation methods of student debate performance and on a corresponding reflective writing assignment. Student and faculty takeaways and prospective classroom debate ideas will be provided.

HOUSE HUNTERS, GERONTOLOGY STYLE: A UNIQUE CLASSROOM ACTIVITY FOR UNDERGRADUATES

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Small group discussion activities that capitalize on students' interest in technology may generate enthusiasm for course content in gerontology. We describe a unique classroom activity that supports discussion about retirement issues in older adulthood by leveraging student dexterity in utilizing web applications. In this activity, students act as real estate agents for a retired older adult couple who is relocating to be closer to family. Students are presented with details about the couple, including demographic information (e.g., age, functional limitations, hobbies) and the couple's "wish list" for features and amenities of their future home. Then, students use these details to choose a home for the couple on Zillow and prepare a "pitch" of the home that is presented to the class and judged by the course instructor. Feedback from students suggests that this activity offers a "real world application to course material" and facilitates enthusiasm about course content.

Session 2235 (Symposium)

FACTORS AND FUNCTIONS ASSOCIATED WITH HEALTH AND WELL-BEING AMONG OLDER ADULTS: EVIDENCE FROM NHATS

Chair: Loretta Anderson
Co-Chair: Alexandra Wennberg
Discussant: Allison Gibson

The National Health and Aging Trends Study (NHATS) is a nationally representative sample of Medicare beneficiaries aged 65 and older. From 2011 through 2020, annual in-person interviews have collected data in many areas, including health, environment, wellbeing, cognition, and function. With a decade of follow-up, including replenishment samples, NHATS is an ideal setting to investigate trends and trajectories of aging. Aging is heterogeneous and understanding the myriad of factors and functions that impact health and wellbeing is critical to developing interventions and care to promote health and wellbeing. Considering a multifactorial, wholistic approach to aging will provide a deeper understanding to create an impact. This symposium features pivotal research conducted using NHATS data, while highlighting overall strengths of the dataset for future research. The first presentation of this symposium investigates the factors that define cognitive profiles associated with dementia diagnosis over a period of five years. The second presentation investigates the role engagement in personally meaningful activities play in cognitive, emotional, functional, and health-related outcomes in older adults. The third presentation investigates the association between sleep medication use and fall risk among older adults with and without dementia. The session concludes with an investigation of end-of-life communication in persons with dementia and hearing impairment.

COGNITIVE DECLINE OVER A 5-YEAR PERIOD: THE NATIONAL HEALTH AND AGING TRENDS STUDY

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The classification of Alzheimer's disease and related dementia (ADRD) is important for understanding the progression of cognitive decline. This longitudinal study used data from the National Health and Aging Trends Study (NHATS). A sample of 3,287 eligible Medicare beneficiaries were included in the study. Nine cognitive profiles were examined from Waves 1 to 5 (2011-2015). Discriminant factor analysis was used to identify factors that differentiated across the cognitive profiles. Results showed that 1,076 had some measure of "possible" or "probable" dementia over the 5 years. In Wave 1, there were 104 self-reported ADRD diagnoses, and in Wave 5, there were 327 self-reported ADRD diagnoses. Social participation was an important factor in those that impairment reversed from probable to possible ADRD. Findings support previous evidence that certain activities may slow or reverse cognitive decline and can inform future studies exploring the causality of dementia onset.

FAVORITE ACTIVITY AND IMPLICATIONS FOR COGNITION, MENTAL HEALTH, AND FUNCTION IN PERSONS WITH AND WITHOUT DEMENTIA

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