unique visual methodology by photographing their experiences which highlighted daily life. While acknowledging that their years ‘before’ were different, and that life going forward may present unwelcome challenges, life in the now brought new joys and self-determination, despite various bodily compromises. Their perceptions of their bodies defied the dominant narrative of decline. These important findings warrant further investigation of the ways in which this emerging cohort views the challenges of aging bodies and their ability to remain socially connected. The role the dominant narrative of decline plays in their lives may prove to misdirect supports.

THE CORPOREALITY OF LATE AGE
Chris Gilleard, University College London, UCL, England, United Kingdom

In a study of over a thousand Germans, Paul Baltes and his colleagues observed that most respondents saw age 80-84 as the preferred age to reach before dying. Living beyond 85 was only desired by a minority. Perhaps this is because this age seems to many the point when bodily disease and physical weakness render life not just unpleasant but actively burdensome. Such views underpin the social imaginary of an undesirable fourth age. This paper discusses the significance of corporeality as both representation and lived experience, raising the question of whether the disparity between real and imagined corporealities resides as much from an ‘other’ within as without.

Session 4630 (Symposium)

VIEWS OF AGING DURING THE CORONA PANDEMIC
Chair: Jennifer Bellingtger
Co-Chair: Anna Kornadt

In the Covid-19 pandemic, media stories and government reports have emphasized the heightened risk of being “old” and placed a spotlight on the way we think and talk about older adults and aging. In this symposium we investigate how the pandemic and the public discourse about older adults has shaped views of aging in different countries. Bellingtger et al. report on German children’s views of older adults before and during the pandemic. Children placed greater distance between themselves and older adults both before and after the pandemic, suggesting early ageism in children that predates the pandemic. Levy et al. provide experimental evidence that media stereotypes about aging and Covid-19 influence the mental health of older American adults, both in positive and negative. Schwartz and Ayalon found that greater perceptions of age-based discrimination in the healthcare system by Israeli adults 50+ were significantly related to greater Covid-19 worries. Greater worry can motivate older adults to take precautions, but be detrimental if it becomes too high. In line with this finding, Tingvold et al. found in a study with older adults from Luxembourg that more Covid-19 worry predicted feeling older four months later, but only for those in worse health. Finally, Terracciano examined longitudinal change in subjective age and found that American adults reported feeling younger after the emergence of Covid-19 than before, suggesting that perceptions of aging partly reflect a coping process to counter the negativity in the media.

A MULTI-METHOD EXAMINATION OF AGEISM IN CHILDREN BEFORE AND DURING THE PANDEMIC
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The pandemic has made age more salient. Access to vaccines, mandates to wear masks, and recommendations for contact restrictions have all varied by age. Developmental intergroup theory proposes that greater salience of a feature can lead to greater stereotyping and prejudice. We investigated this with a multi-method assessment of ageism in children (N = 57, ages 4-8), where data collection occurred both before and during the pandemic. In simulated behavioral measures, children preferred to sit closer to younger adults (mean distance = 1.8 seats) versus older adults (mean distance = 2.8 seats), and, for a simulated treasure hunt, they chose 3.36 younger, versus 1.63 older, teammates. Explicit (picture ratings) and implicit (IAT) ratings also significantly favored younger adults. These preferences were not exacerbated by the pandemic. Although ageism is present at young ages, we found no evidence that this has thus far worsened in the pandemic.

SELF- AND OTHER-DIRECTED AGEISM AND WORRIES CONCERNING COVID-19 HEALTH CONSEQUENCES
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Worries associated with COVID-19 health consequences are well-justified. They may motivate people to take safety precautions, but may hinder if they become too intense. Current research examined mainly age and gender as potentially associated with worries. This study instead, focuses on self-perceptions of ageing (SPA) and perceived age discrimination as potential predictors of worry, in light of the ageism pandemic which co-occurred with the COVID-19 outbreak. The study is based on a national representative sample of 1,092 adults aged 50+ in Israel. Phone interviews were conducted between March – May 2020, when Israel gradually moved from strict to partial lockdown. Our findings show that SPA and age-based discrimination in the healthcare system were significant predictors of worries. The findings point to the potentially negative impact of the ageism pandemic in relation to worries. Interventions that address ageism directed by self or others might alleviate people’s worries in the COVID-19 pandemic.

IMPACT OF MEDIA-BASED AGE STEREOTYPES ON OLDER INDIVIDUALS’ MENTAL HEALTH DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC
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During the COVID-19 pandemic, stigmatization of older persons has increased in traditional and social media. It was unknown whether this negative messaging could be detrimental to the mental health of older individuals, and whether the relatively uncommon positive messaging about older