Can Age Discrimination Kill You?

Posted on 05/12/2014 by Bill Hogan

Age discrimination can be hazardous to your health, a new study by researchers at Florida State University’s College of Medicine has found.

What’s more, people who see themselves as targets of age discrimination are likelier to be in poor health than victims of race or sex discrimination, according to the study.

“What we found was unexpected and striking,” said the study’s lead author, Angelina Sutin, assistant professor of behavioral sciences and social medicine.

The study, which was published in the American Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry, noted that Americans 50 or older who perceived discrimination based on their age had significantly lower physical and emotional health — and greater declines in health — than people who did not report experiencing such discrimination.

Loneliness is the most widespread health consequence of age discrimination, the study reported. Chronic loneliness, experts say, can have a wide range of adverse health consequences, including sleep disruptions; dementia; an increased risk of early death from heart attacks, strokes or other cardiovascular complications; and suicide.