

# Advertising images of elderly

[Life](#), [Death](#)



Advertising Images of Elderly The attitudes younger generations have of the elderly and the relationships they share, as well as perceptions older people have of themselves, are directly affected by stereotypes portrayed in television advertisements (Hillier & Barrow, 2011, p. 35). When the elderly are visible in advertising, it is typically in life insurance and emergency catastrophe product commercials. These ads implied that the elderly are feeble, stubborn, grouchy, lonely, ugly, helpless, mentally declined, and isolated (" Life Call Commercial, " n. d.). As a group, they suffered from immobility, illness, and frailness (" August 2004 Commercials part 9, " n. d.). By portraying the elderly in a negative aspect in advertising, younger audiences and senior citizens began to accept the stereotypical and an unrealistic portrait of aging (Hillier & Barrow, 2011, p 39-41). All too many advertisements that use the elderly perpetuate negative aging stereotypes. These television ads often try to generate media attention that overemphasizes the vulnerability of older people (Hillier & Barrow, 2011, p 47). One clear example of this, when Lifecall began running an overly dramatic advertisement in the late 1980's. Typically, these older actors in these commercials were forced to portray characters that were either deathly ill or sprawled across the bathroom floor clutched to a walker, crying " Help! I've fallen and I can't get up! " The ad gave younger viewers the impression that the elderly were all of a sudden incapable of being alone at home, unable to get help, perhaps for hours or even days. They must rely on their medical alert pendant if they were ever going to call an ambulance, a next door neighbor, family, or a doctor (" Life Call Commercial, " n. d.).

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In other ads, the elderly were

repeatedly reminded of negative stereotypes associated with aging (Hillier & Barrow, 2011, p. 47). As the older spokeswoman dropped change into the parking meter, she described to a group of listeners that Colonial Penn Life Insurance helped make sure that her money problems did not become a burden to her family. The commercial continued to communicate with the elderly that the average cost of a funeral was over six thousand dollars ("August 2004 Commercials part 9, " n. d.). These advertisements conveyed the idea to the elderly that their departure will place significant financial burdens to their family members. They would more likely be remembered for putting their families into extensive debt. By repeatedly exposing negative portrayals of elderly in Lifecall and Colonial Penn Life Insurance television ads, many children and young adults have lost their respect for the elderly. They believe in wrong or emphasize fictional messages of older people. They see the elderly as defenseless and burdens. Also, the negative stereotypes in television ads have a serious effect on older people's self-esteem. They take on the negative stereotypes generated on television ads.