

Care of elderly persons in american and hispanic culture

People



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In the United States, particularly in its more urbanized regions, there is a clear discrimination against the elderly, particularly in its more urbanized regions. This ageism is also apparent in mass media. In American movies, for instance, elderly persons in "homes" (homes for the aged) are a frequent sight. The nursing home is a potent demonstration of American society's cultural attitude towards its elderly.

In American culture, it is acceptable for a child to talk in a straightforward and frank manner to elderly people, sometimes to the point of rudeness. However, most Hispanic children are taught to talk to elders with respect and reverence.

Elders often have the last say in the household. From early childhood, Hispanic children are taught to respect older persons, because respect for elders connotes respect for oneself.

Today many elderly persons in the United States are isolated from their families, although this kind of treatment of the elderly in the United States was not always so. In the 17th and 18th centuries, the elderly used to be more respected, perhaps also because of the low life expectancy in those times, so that there were only very few elderly people, making their contributions to society much more valuable.

However, the increased life expectancy of modern United States society has dramatically increased the proportion of the elderly in modern societies such as in America, which in turn has led to the increasing irrelevance of the elderly from an economic and practical view. Now American culture reveres youth, but at the same time looks down on old age.

Many aging persons in America grow old and become afraid that their family will eventually put them in a home, and that they will have no choice but to concede. Between 17 to 20 percent of all deaths in the United States happen in nursing homes (although this number would be higher if not for the common practice of moving nursing home residents to the hospital almost immediately before death).

In American culture, independence is highly valued, sometimes to the point of alienation. In contrast, Hispanic culture may be seen by Americans as more "clingy." Hispanic culture is very family oriented. Hispanics typically have strong family ties and are more likely to support extended family members, including their elderly.

Hispanic culture emphasizes respect for elders, and this is reflected in how their elders are treated. Many Hispanic households have the traditional structure of housing three generations. Many elderly Hispanics are also poor and cannot live independently, but they are welcomed to stay in their children's homes.

However, with increasing urbanization, even Hispanic society is increasingly going the route of Americans in this regard.

Nursing homes have a "presence" in American culture that is lacking in Hispanic culture; most Hispanic people assume that they would eventually be taking care of their elderly parents. This is not to say that ageism is exclusive to America.

It is true that in most cultures a form of ageism exists, but in many Asian and Hispanic countries, this is more of a positive ageism, where elders are given

more respect and are listened to and revered (although this seems to be changing with the rise of urbanization worldwide).