

Older men and health

Anthony Brown

University of Western Sydney

Health Consumers NSW





Presentation

- Health?
- Social connections
- Access
- Grandfathers
- Who ages better?





What is health?

- Older men conceptualise *health* holistically
(Macdonald *et.al.* 2001)
- Social Determinants of Health
- Health as *interaction* with environment
(Macdonald 2005)



Social Connections

- Fewer friends than older women
- Value these friendships as much
- Tend to make friends through work and leisure activities



Scott & Wenger (1995)

Access to services

Personal Factors

- Independence “I can manage myself”
- Help-seeking behaviours
- Don’t identify as needing help
- Don’t know services exist
- Perceive services as feminised



Macdonald, *et. al.* (2009).

Access to services

Services

- Activities not of interest
- Don't specifically target men (marketing / images)
- 'Language of care'
- Attitudes



Macdonald *et. al.* (2001)

Macdonald *et. al.* (2009)

Grandfathers

- Roles of grandfathers changing (gender norms)
- Grandfathers under researched



(Tarrant, 2012)



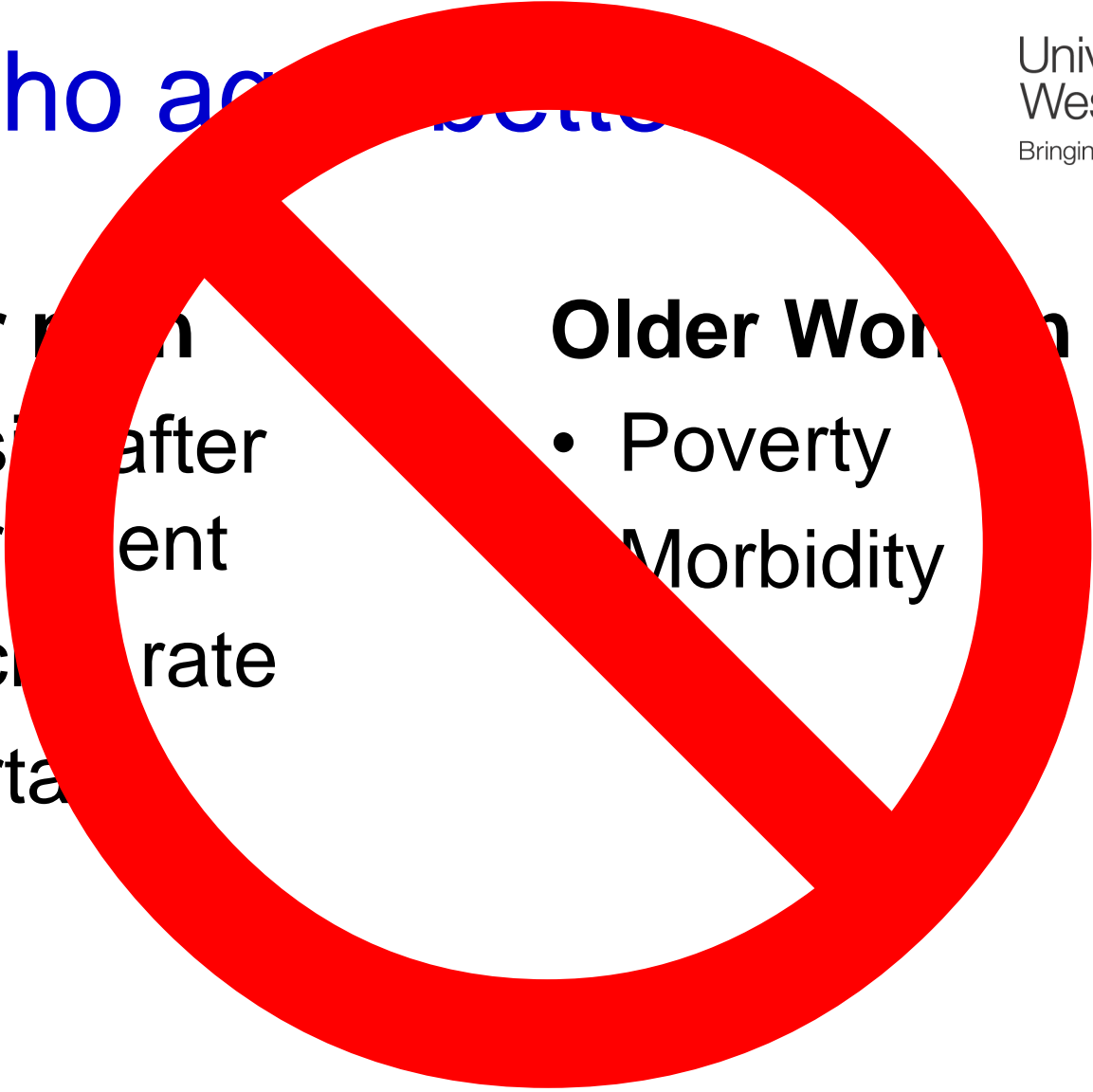
So who are the victims?

Older men

- 'crisis' after retirement
- suicide rate
- Mortality

Older Women

- Poverty
- Morbidity



Paradigm of 'competitive suffering'

(Russel, 2007)



The way forward...

While we

“quite properly are concerned to document the demographic, social and political forces and interests that shape the lives of older women and men, it is equally important to address the personal and cultural implications of population ageing as ***lived realities.***”

(Russell, 2007, p. 114, emphasis added)

References

- Australian Human Rights Commission. (2013). Fact or fiction? Stereotypes of older Australians: AHRC.
- Macdonald, J. J., Brown, A. J., & Buchanan, J. (2001). Keeping the balance: Older men and healthy ageing. Sydney: NSW Committee on Ageing.
- Macdonald, J. J., Brown, A. J., & Gethin, A. (2009). Older men and Home and Community Care Services: Barriers to access and effective models of care. *MHIRC Papers*. Penrith, NSW: University of Western Sydney.
- Russell, C. (2007). Gender and ageing. In A. Borowski, S. Encel, & E. Ozanne (Eds.), *Longevity and social change in Australia* (pp. 99-116). Sydney: UNSW Press.
- Scott, A., & Wenger, C. (1995). Gender and social support networks in later life. In S. Arber & J. Ginn (Eds.), *Connecting gender and ageing: A sociological approach* (pp. 158-172). Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Tarrant, A. (2012). Grandfathering: The construction of new identities and masculinities. In S. Arber & V. Timonen (Eds.), *Contemporary grandparenting: Changing family relationships in global contexts* (pp. 181-201). Bristol: Policy.