



Medical Sociology and Old Age: Towards a sociology of health in later life (Critical Studies in Health and Society)

Paul Higgs, Ian Rees Jones

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The nature of health in later life has conventionally been studied from two perspectives. Medical sociologists have focused on the failing body, chronic illness, infirmity and mortality, while social gerontologists on the other hand have focused on the epidemiology of old age and health and social policy. By examining these perspectives, Higgs and Jones show how both standpoints have a restricted sense of contemporary ageing which has prevented an understanding of the way in which health in later life has changed. In the book, the authors point out that the current debates on longevity and disability are being transformed by the emergence of a fitter and healthier older population. This third age - where fitness and participation are valorised – leads to the increasing salience of issues such as bodily control, age-denial and anti-ageing medicine. By discussing the key issue of old age versus ageing, the authors examine the prospect of a new sociology – a sociology of health in later life.

Medical Sociology and Old Age is essential reading for all students and researchers of medical sociology and gerontology and for anyone concerned with the challenge of ageing populations in the twenty-first century.

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