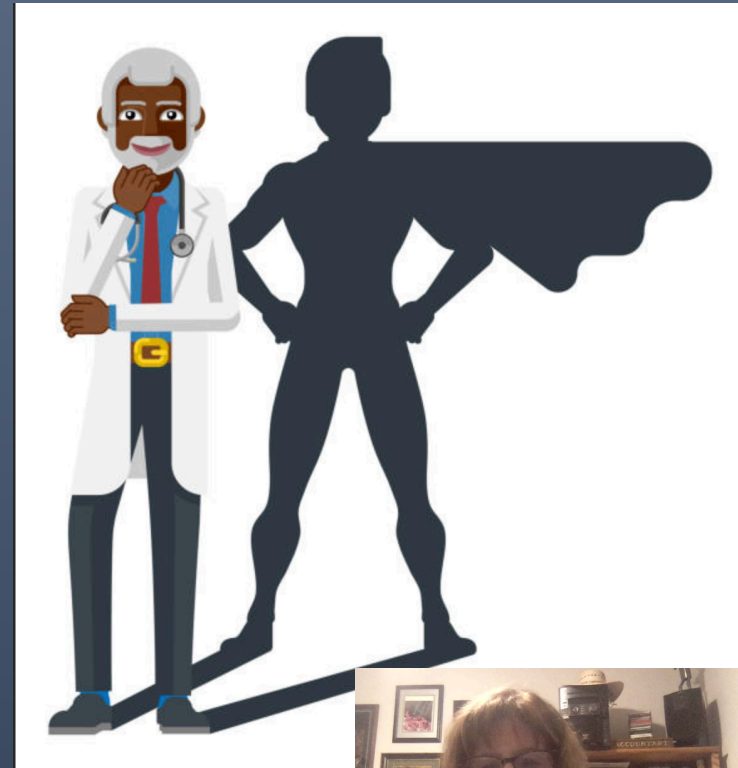


# Ageism in the PA Profession

-Melinda Moore Gottschalk PA-C MPAS, DFAAPA



# Disclosures

- No relevant commercial relationships to disclose.



# Learning Objectives

At the end of this session, participants should be able to:

- Recognize ageism and its potential to affect the PA profession
- Consider the impact of an ageism bias on PA employment and advancement of opportunities





# What is Ageism

- The World Health Organization (WHO) describes ageism as discrimination against older men and women, naming ageism as the most socially accepted form of discrimination<sup>1</sup>
- Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has guidelines stating discrimination against a worker because of age is illegal<sup>2</sup>





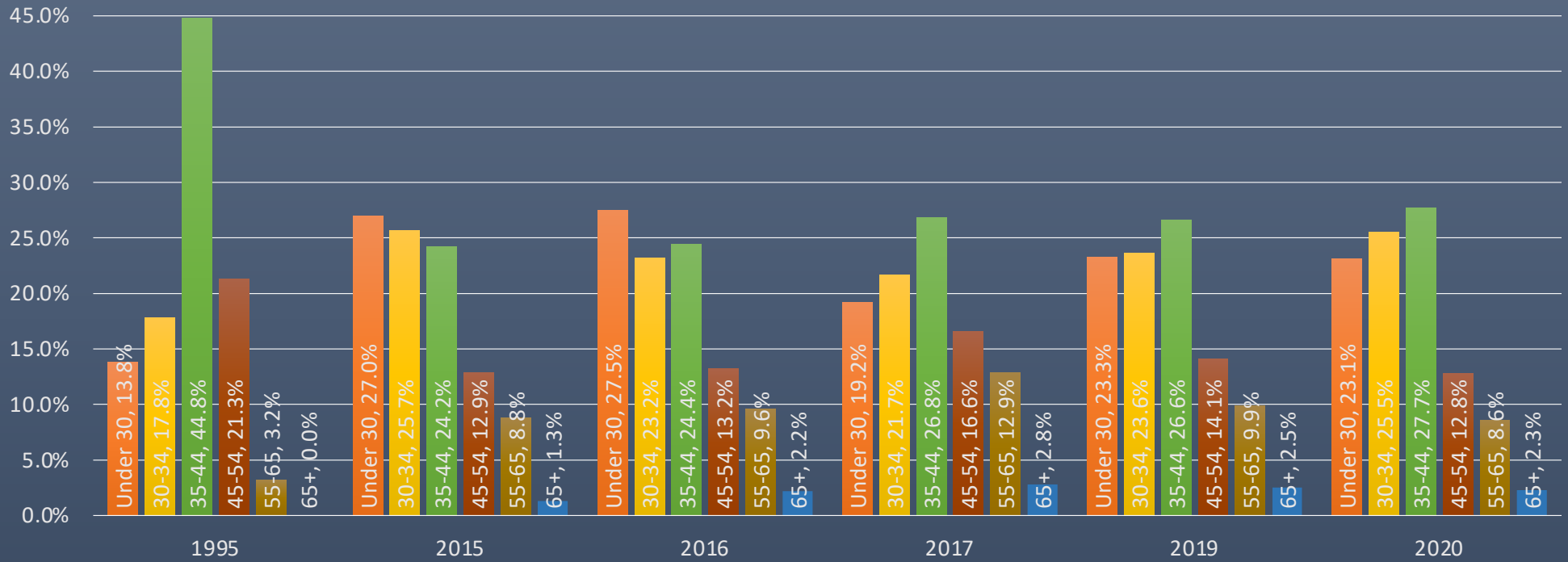
## Discussion

# The First PAs

- 1st PA class-1965<sup>12</sup>
- Early PAs
  - Silent Generation 1928-1945
  - Baby Boomers 1946-1964
- Retire or keep working
  - Need vs. wants



# Generation Gap 1995-2020<sup>13,14</sup>



# Why?

- Why are workers not retiring?<sup>5</sup>
  - Living longer
    - Savings many not be enough
  - Like working-many workers enjoy working
    - Want to feel useful-otherwise more likely to develop disability, die prematurely
    - Friends at work
  - Need to work
    - No retirement (those 55 +)
    - No more pensions
    - 401K have variable employer participation
      - Funds subject to economy
    - Many only have Social Security



# A Few Facts- from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics<sup>3</sup>



- Average workers in US (as of January 2021)
  - 20-24 y.o.: 12,497,000
  - 25-34 y.o.: 33,426,000
  - 35-44 y.o.: 31,807,000
  - 45-54 y.o.: 30,099,000
  - 55-64 y.o.: 25,454,000
  - 65+ y.o.: 9,842,000 6.1% of workers
    - Increase from 6,420,000 in January 2011 (56% work full-time)
- Human Resources workers: average age 40.9-45.1
- Physicians: average age 41.7-46.2
- PAs: average age 39.0
- NPs: average age 43.4





# A Few More Facts-from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics<sup>4</sup>



## Time at a Job

- Workers age 60+y.o.: average >10+ years
  - Workers 45-59 y.o.: average of 7.5 years
  - Workers 25-45 y.o.: average 2.7 to 4.5 years
  - Average of all workers: 4.5 years
- 
- Negates the thought that hiring an older worker means a company would have increased turnover .
- 
- Myth: older workers don't like technology



# Ageism-study

- AT Still-DMSc Capstone Research
- Literature Review → no data on ageism in PA Profession



# Study Question

This exploratory study will assess if an ageism bias exists in the PA profession.

If an ageism bias does exist, does the bias affect the hiring practices of PAs and others that hire PAs. Is there a way to mitigate ageism's effect on the career of older PAs.

IDEAS  
KNOW  
NO  
AGE

---

**Grandma Moses  
had her first painting  
hung at the Museum  
of Modern Art  
when she was 79.**

---

*End Adver*





# Ageism-study

- 28 questions (including elimination question)
- Posted on Social Media Sites, ect
- Demographic information
- Multiple choice questions examining bias
- One open-ended question
- 83% completion rate, 5 minutes average



# What?

- Demographics: age, gender, length or practice, degree, job title, role in hiring PAs
- Bias questions: Belief in ageism, who experiences most often, at what age do we experience ageism, personal experience discriminating or being discriminated against because of age, opinion on PAs working past age 65, mandatory retirement, mandatory cognitive testing based solely on age
- Ambivalent Ageism Scale<sup>6</sup> by Alison Chasteen, PhD,
  - Benevolent and Hostile Ageism Bias



# A word about bias

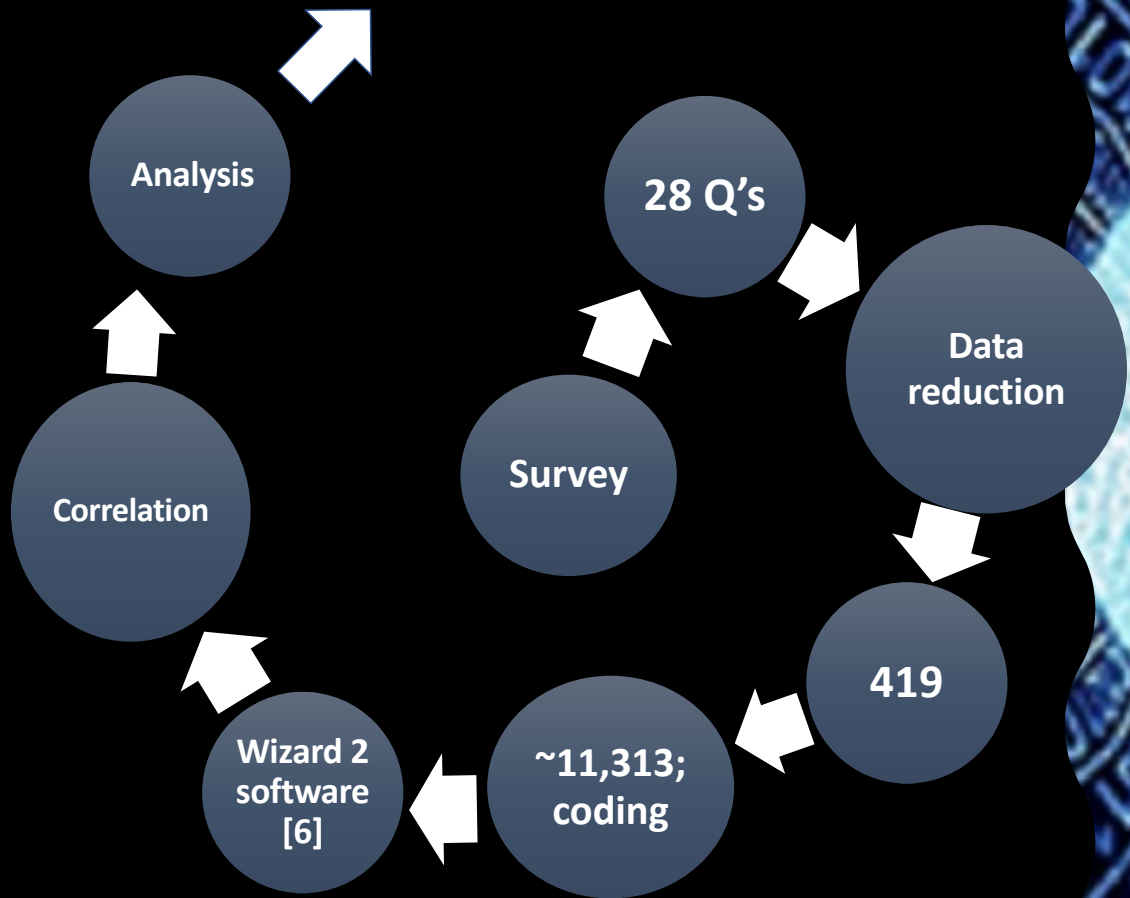
- **Blatant Bias:**<sup>8,9</sup>
  - undeniable and intentional action of supporting or opposing a person secondary to stereotype (hostile vs. benevolent)
- **Unconscious Bias:**<sup>10</sup>
  - unconscious forms of discrimination and stereotyping based on race, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, ability, age, and more.
- **No Bias**-no bias beliefs
- **Denial of Bias**-do not believe ageism exists

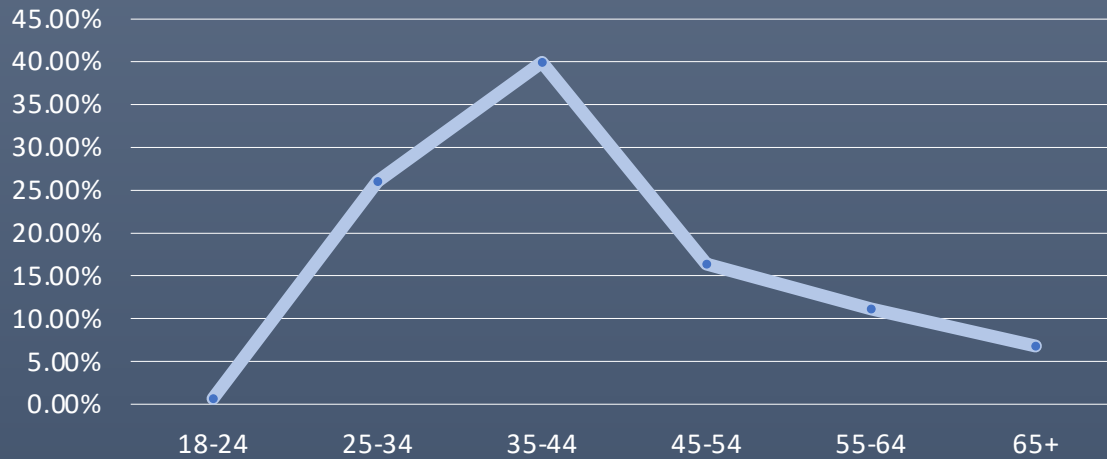
"There is no neutrality. There is only greater or lesser awareness of one's bias."

~Phyllis Rose<sup>11</sup>~



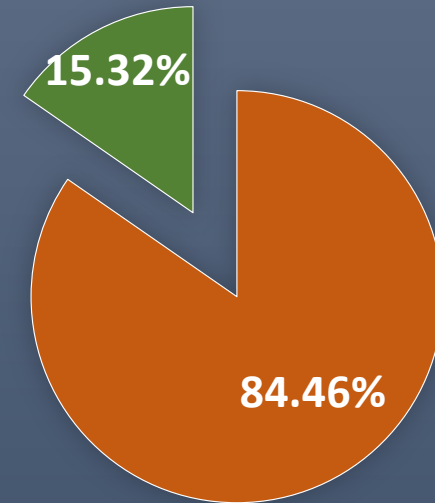
# Paper, poster, lecture





Age of Participant

84.4% female; 15.6 male; (2020 AAPA salary report: 69% female, 30.9% male, 0.1% prefer self identify)



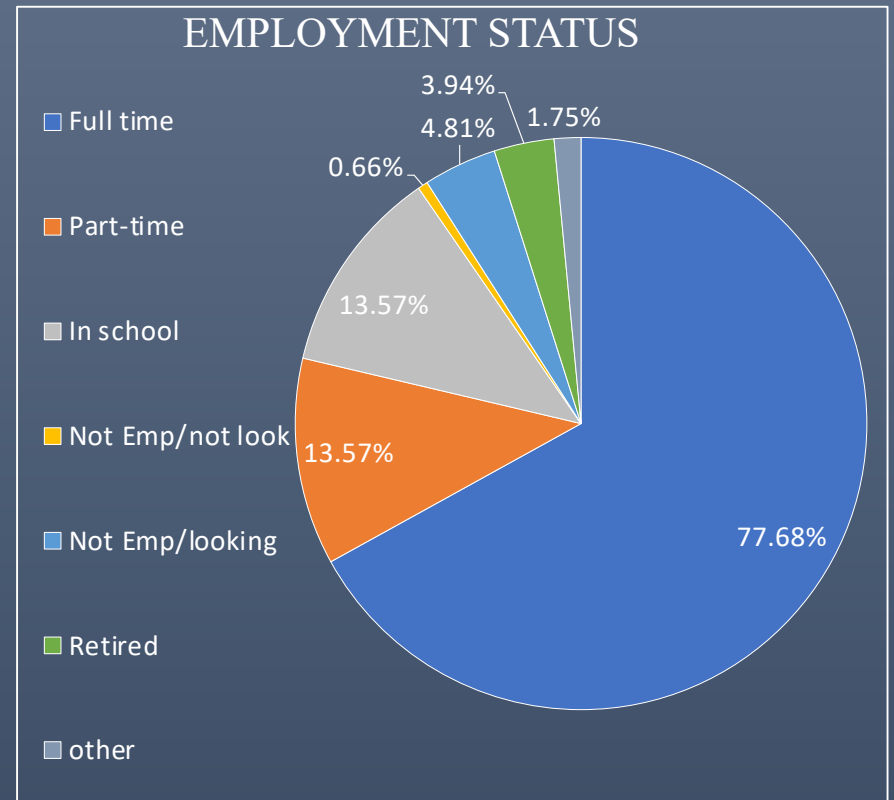
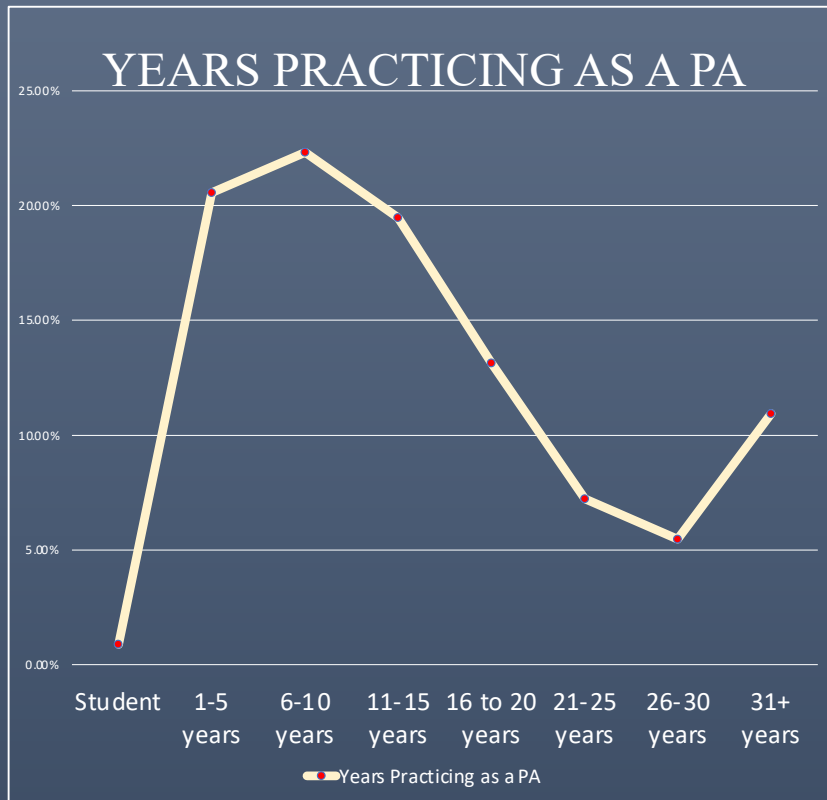
Female Male

# Results:

## Age and Gender of Participants





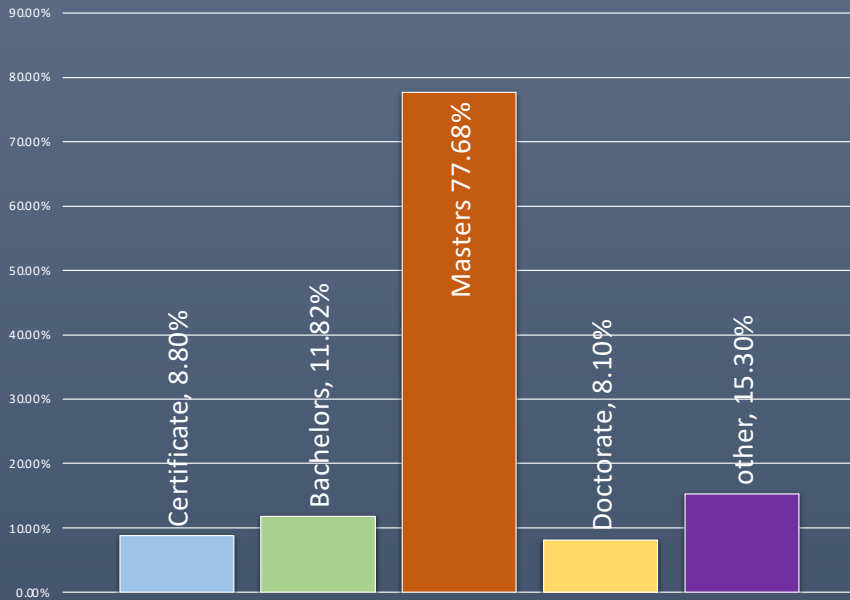


# Results

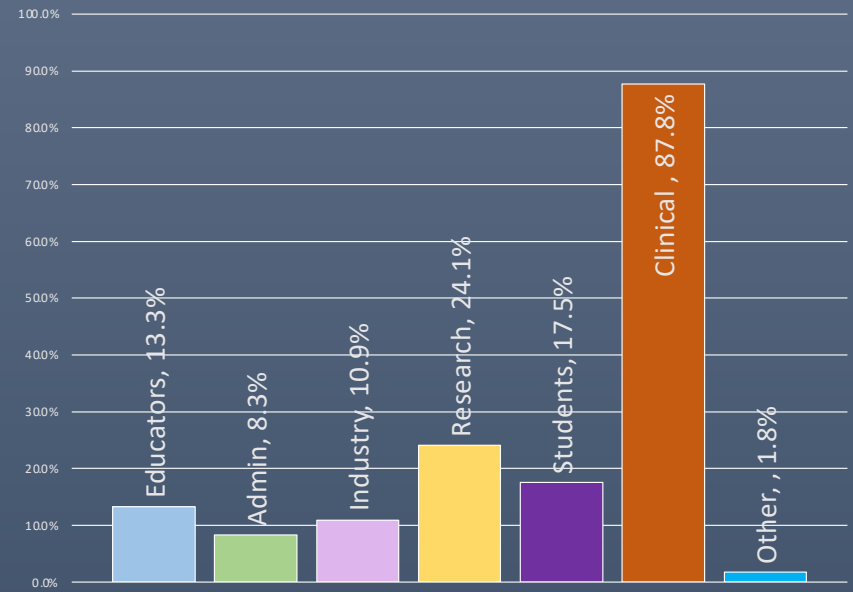
Years practicing and employment



## EDUCATION



## JOB TITLE

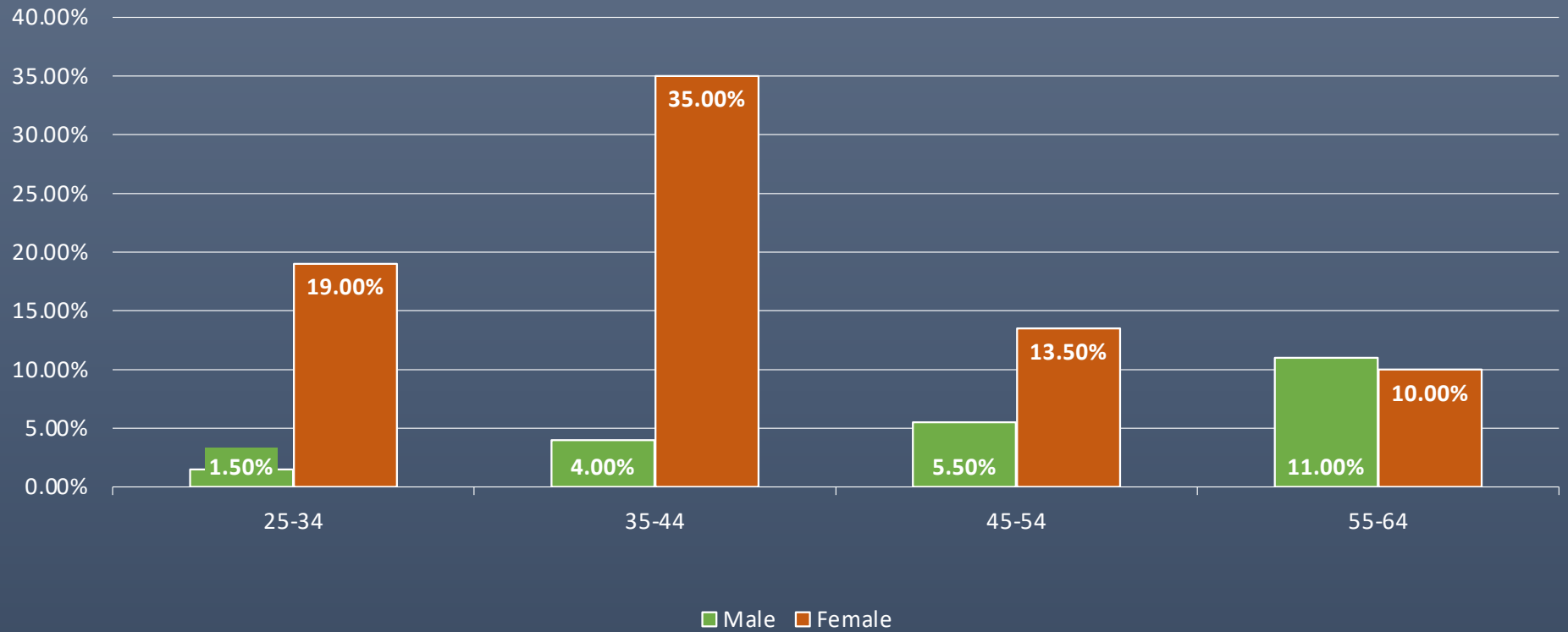


# Results

Most likely to have a Masters and clinical work



## AGE AND GENDER OF PAS WHO HAVE ROLE IN HIRING PAS



Results:  
Role in hiring PAs



# Results

Age (Percentage of overall participants).	18-24 0.66% (not used in comparison)	25-34 26.04%	35-44 38.95%	45-54 16.41%	55-64 11.16%	65+ 6.78%	Role of hiring PAs /All Ages
Role in hiring PA	Yes 66.67% No 33.33%	Yes 26.05% No 73.95%	Yes 29.38% No 70.62%	Yes 32.0% No 68.0%	Yes 33.33% No 66.67%	Yes 32.26% No 67.74%	Yes 29.82% No 70.18%
Mandatory Retirement Age	Yes 0% No 100%	Yes 3.36% No 95.3% C 2.52% Ed 0.84%	Yes 2.81% No 98.1% C 1.69% Ed 0.56% All 0.56%	Yes 3.99% No 90.3% C 1.33% Ed 1.33% All 1.33%	Yes 1.92% No 94.0% C 1.92%	Yes 0% No 100%	Yes 3.5% No 96.3%  All ages Yes 4.3% No: 94.8
Mandatory Cognitive Testing based solely on age discriminatory	Yes 66.67% No 33.33%	Yes 62.6% No 16.8% Not Sure 32.4%	Yes 61.3% No 16.9% Not Sure 20%	Yes 72.2% No 22.2% Not Sure 5.6%	Yes 68.63% No 14.0% Not Sure 16.0%	Yes 73.10% No 19.20% Not Sure 7.1%	Yes 65.2% No 17.9 Not sure 16.2% ----- All ages Yes: 65.9% No: 17.9% Not Sure: 16.2%

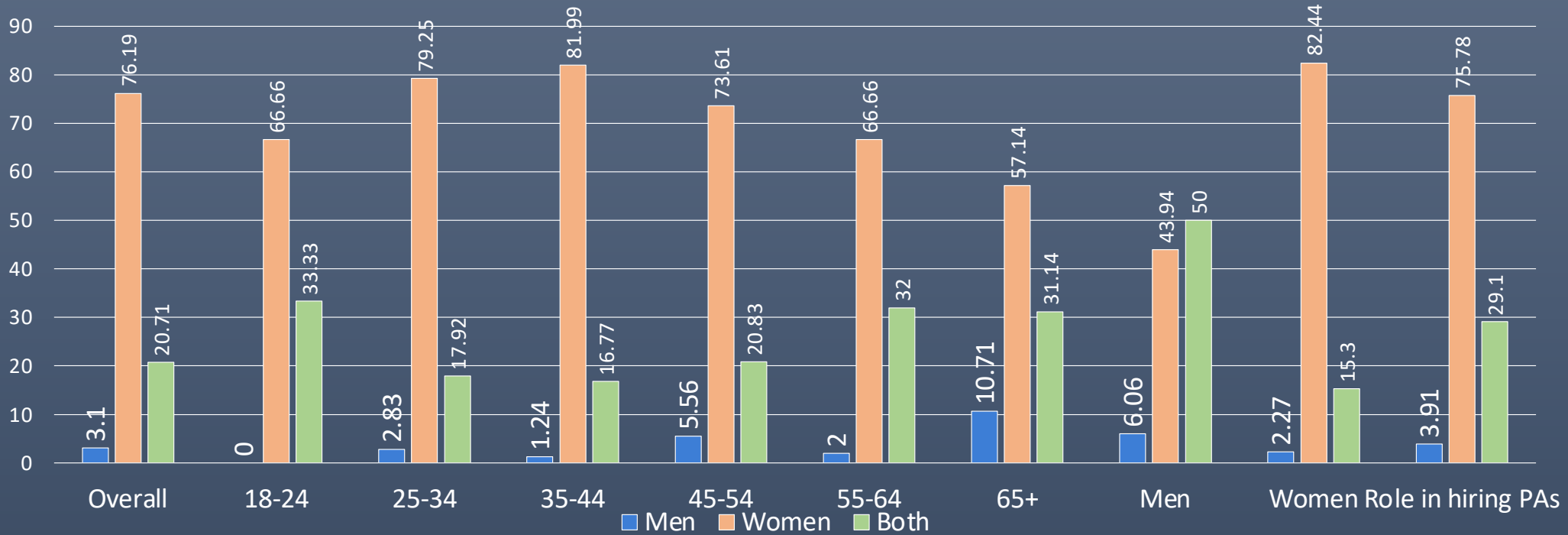


<b>Ageism Bias in Hiring PAs Practices by other PAs</b>	The two-way ANOVA test comparing age and role of hiring: statistic of T (414) = 0.144, critical value @ 5% C = 1.966, T > C P-value 0.681.	<b>No significance</b> in overall participants. Age of PA participant does not affect the hiring practices of the PA who has a role in hiring PAs
<b>PAs admitting age discrimination at work and outside of work</b>	A t-Test using the age of all participants	<b>Statistically significant</b> P-value at 0.048
	Kruskal-Wallis test comparing each age groups individually asking if participate discriminated against someone based on age	<b>Showed overall every are group=positivity of a bias.</b>
<b>PAs opinion on mandatory cognitive testing based only on age</b>	Chi-Square test on all participants	Overall, <b>statistically significant every age group=</b> P value 0.047

<b>(Mandatory cognitive testing-continued)</b>	Chi-square testing on each age group was <b>significant</b>	<b>45- to 54-year-old PA group</b> <b>Statistical significance</b> with a P-value of 0.041 signifying preference for mandatory cognitive testing on older PAs based solely on age
<b>PA opinion on mandatory retirement of PA</b>	t-Test <b>comparing age of all participants</b>	Test statistics: t (416) = 0.899. Critical value @ 5% equals C = 1.966. <b>No statistical significance</b> noted. [t > C]. P-value = 0.36945 in all participants
	The Chi-square test on each age group	<b>45 to 54-year-old participants</b> Testing indicated <b>preference for mandatory retirement</b> requirements in the PA profession,
Age Men vs. Women experiencing Ageism	Paired t-Test t (417) -10.526 P-value <0.001	Men Age: <b>53.65</b> +/- 2.116 Women Age: <b>45.172</b> +/- 1.984

# Results

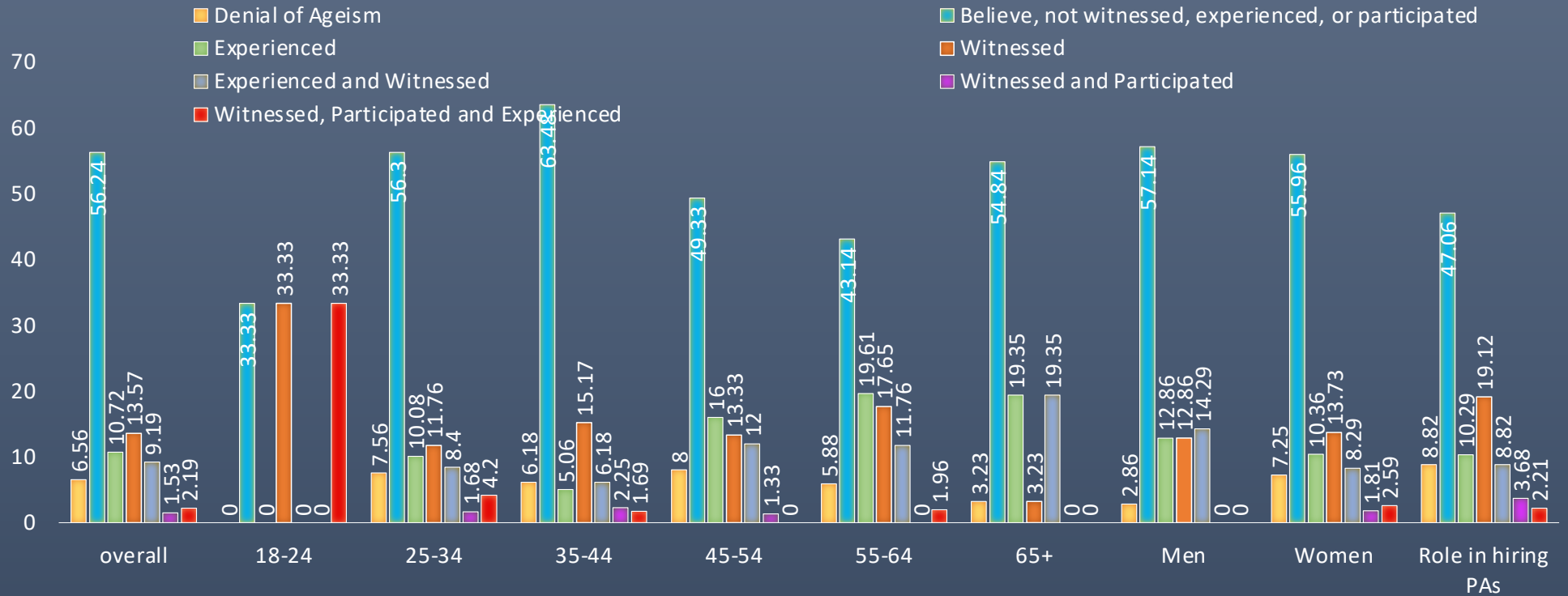




Results:  
Gender Experiencing Ageism Most Often



# DO YOU BELIEVE IN A REAL OR PERCEIVED AGEISM BIAS IN THE PA PROFESSION AFFECTING CAREER PATHS



Results:  
Belief in Ageism Affecting PA Career



# Opinion of PAs working Past 65?

## • No Bias (59.84%)

Skilled and needed  
 Knowledge and experienced  
 Positive, they have value  
 Good for them  
 Inspired by them  
 a wealth of knowledge  
 mentor

I dont even know 50 year old PAs!  
 No opinion  
 Meh  
 dont know any 65 year old PAs  
 Do what you want  
 Havent met one that old  
 Havent thought about it

## No Answer/Denial (7.78%)

## • Blatant Bias (4.40%)

as long as not lazy and are up to date  
 concerned about their ability to be safe  
 Anyone in medicine should retire by age 55  
 Retire  
 They should be careful about their scope  
 mentally slower, set in ther way  
 Struggle with technology

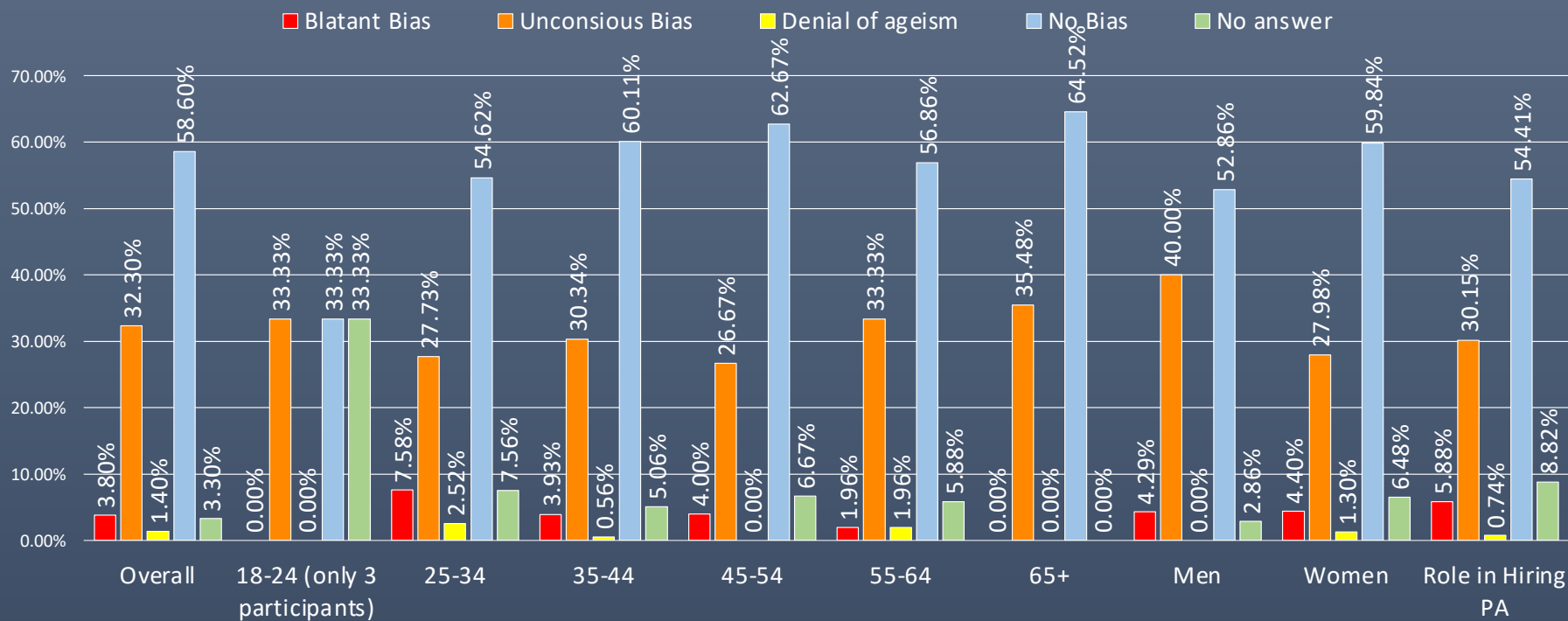
Less stamina, but experienced  
 If they are capable  
 If no cognitive deficits  
 If they can understand technology  
 If they can keep up  
 If the can pass the PANCE  
 If competence

## Unconscious Bias 27.98





## PA's OPINION OF PA WORKING PAST AGE 65



Results: Opinion PAs > 65 working



# Result: Ambivalent Ageism Scale<sup>6</sup>

13 Questions. 1<sup>st</sup> 9 questions= Benevolent ageism. Last 4 question=Hostile ageism

Benevolent ageism: paternalistic, assuming need, often unwanted or needed

Hostile ageism: physical, financial, and verbal abuse, perception older adults as a drain on societal resources.

	<u>AAS Mean</u>	<u>PA Mean</u>	<u>Difference</u>
8. Even if they do not ask for help, older people should always be offered help (Benevolent ageism).	4.28	3.09	<b>-1.19</b>
10. Most old people interpret innocent remarks or acts as being ageist (Hostile ageism)	2.60	2.78	<b>+0.18</b>



# Study Question

This exploratory study will assess if an ageism bias exists in the PA profession.

If an ageism bias does exist, does the bias affect the hiring practices of PAs and others that hire PAs. Is there a way to mitigate ageism's effect on the career of older PAs.

IDEAS  
KNOW  
NO  
AGE

---

**Colonel Sanders,  
started his  
finger-lickin' good  
restaurant at  
age 62.**

---

*End Advertisin* **X**



# Interpretation

Does and ageism bias exist in the PA profession

(Recognize ageism and its potential to affect the PA profession)

Yes, like every profession, the PA profession has an ageism bias

- The PA participants indicated a preference for:
  - Most old people interpret innocent remarks or acts as being ageist-Hostile ageism
  - Indicated they had experience ageism
  - Mandatory cognitive testing solely because of age
  - 21% admitted to discriminating because of age at work (6.5%) and outside of work (14.5%)



# Interpretation

If an ageism bias does exist, does the bias affect a PAs career advancement and the ability to secure employment.

(Consider the Impact of an Ageism bias on PA employment and advancement of opportunities)

- Perhaps-PAs who have a role in hiring PAs indicated the following:
  - No Bias indicated for: Most old people interpret innocent remarks or acts as being ageist.
  - No correlation for having experienced ageism bias at work
  - Positive correlation for "witnessed" and "witnessed and participated" in ageism
  - Positive correlation for mandatory cognitive testing solely because of age
    - PA females hiring managers 25-34 years (20%) of age and 35-44 years (33.7%)
    - 80% in favor vs. 67.7% over all PAs
  - 21.07% discriminated secondary to age at work (7.69%) and outside of work (13.4%)
  - Positive Benevolent ageism (Even if they do not ask for help, you should always offer to help older people )



# Discussion

- PAs **did not** indicate a high level of **blatant ageism bias** (4.40%)
- PAs did indicate an **unconscious bias** of ageism (27.98%)
- PAs did indicate (high level) **no bias** toward ageism (59.84%)
- PAs did indicate they had **discriminated because of age**
- PA hiring managers did display an ageism bias in several areas
  - Benevolent ageism
  - Higher percentage for mandatory testing
  - “Witnessed” and “witnessed and participated” in ageism
- PAs were **in favor of cognitive testing** secondary to only to age
- PAs thought **older people misunderstand** innocent remarks or acts as ageist



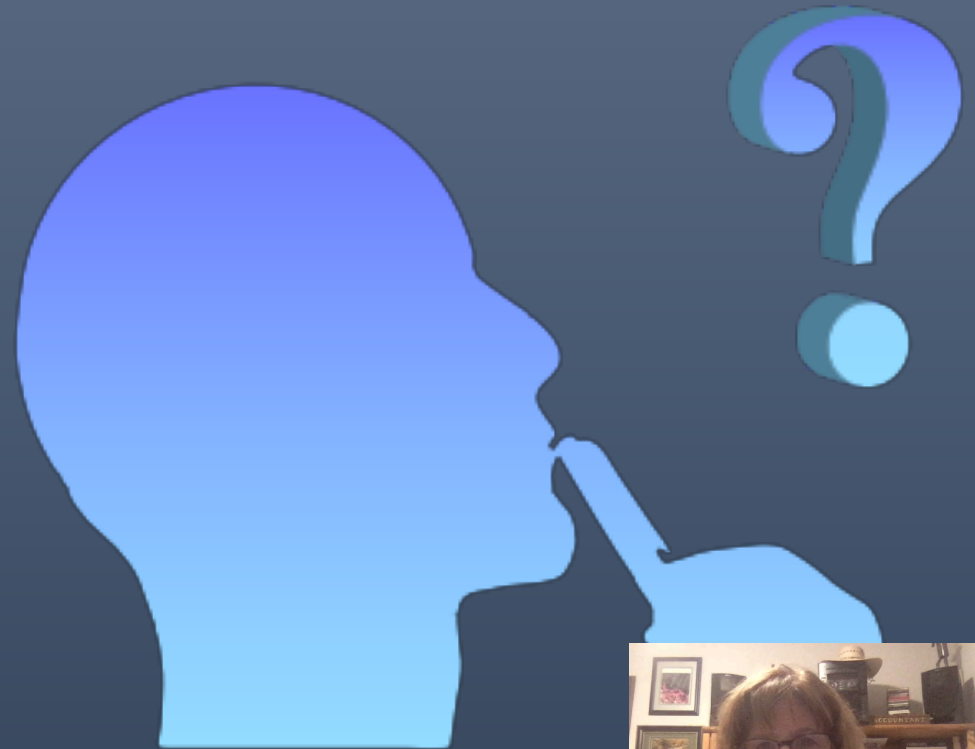
# Age Discrimination

- *Babb vs. Wilkie*<sup>15</sup>
  - Gender and age discrimination
  - Supreme Court ruled in favor of Babb-2020
  - Federal employees need not show “but-for causation” to establish age discrimination liability.”
- Mandatory cognitive testing-only criteria is age<sup>16,17</sup>
  - Competence, not age, is the measure to determine whether a clinician is safe to practice
  - Growing trend
  - *EEOC vs. Yale New Haven Hospital*<sup>18</sup>



# What does all this mean? (Take home points)

- Awareness is necessary as the PA profession ages
  - Strategies





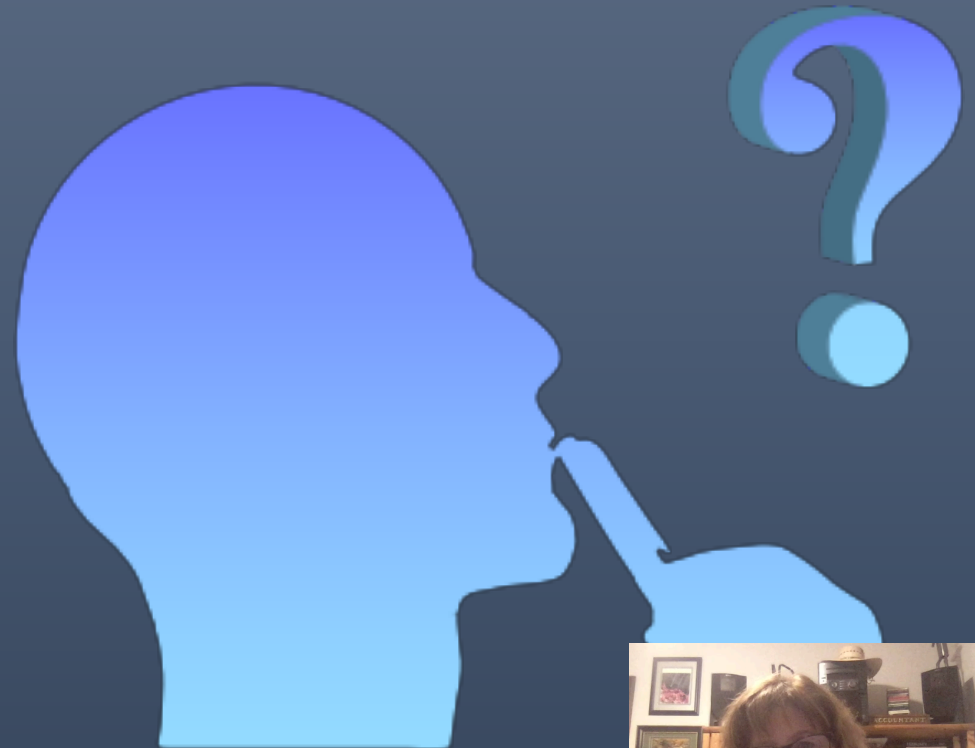
# Strategies: Ways to mitigate ageism

- WHO 10-priorities <sup>19</sup>
- “The AGE Model”<sup>20</sup>
- Combating Workplace Ageism: Reio and Sanders-Reio<sup>21</sup>
- Awareness <sup>22-31</sup>



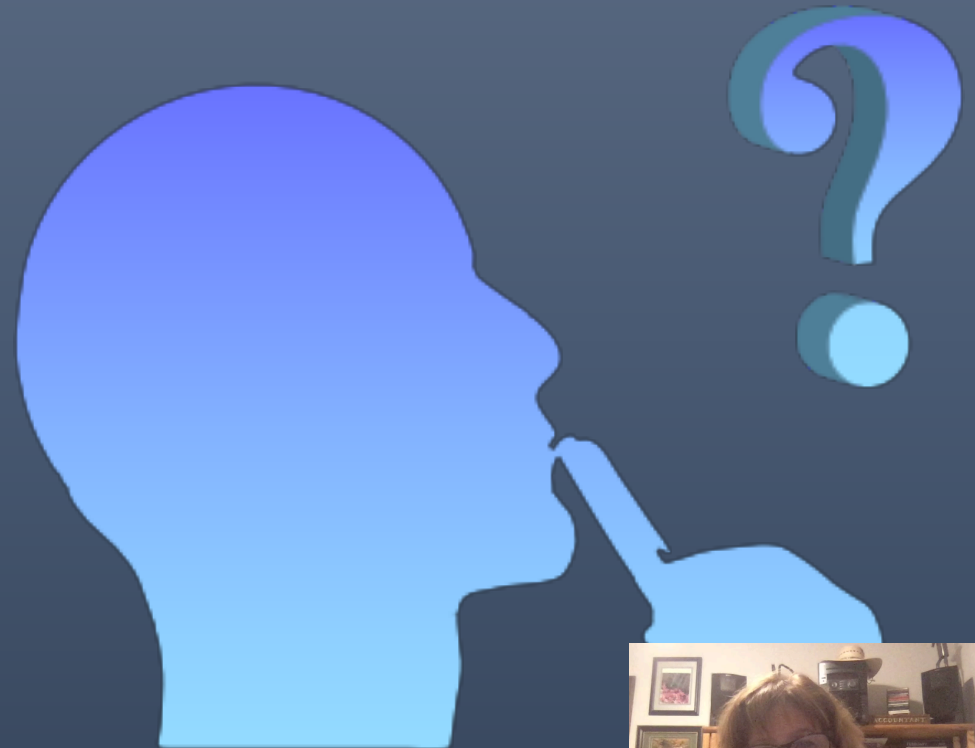
# What does all this mean? (Take home points)

- Awareness is necessary as the PA profession ages
  - Strategies
  - Responsibility of all PAs



# What does all this mean? (Take home points)

- Awareness is necessary as the PA profession ages
  - Strategies
  - Responsibility of all PAs
  - Not just in workplace-ageism in health care important concern



# What does all this mean? (Take home points)

- Awareness is necessary as the PA profession ages
  - Strategies
  - Responsibility of all PAs
  - Not just in workplace-ageism in health care important concern
- More study is needed
  - Additional studies
  - Limitations of study



# Final Thoughts

- Ageism is discrimination against older, experienced healthcare providers.
- Utilizing the WHO program and other proposed education programs could train students and healthcare professionals to acknowledge and mitigate ageism.
- With the increased need for competent providers to meet the unmet demand for healthcare workers, it is imperative to remove artificial barriers and retain experienced competent providers.
- Remember: If you live long enough you will be in the 45 (as a woman) to 57( as a man) age group
- Eliminating ageism in all areas of society benefits everyone.



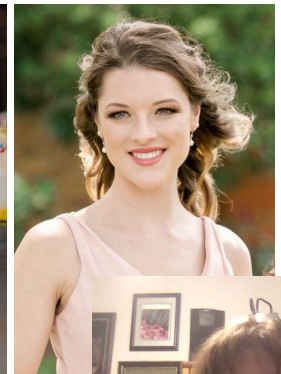
You are never too old  
to set another goal or  
dream a new dream.

—C. S. Lewis



FaithCounts





Thank  
you

- For questions regarding this lecture:
- Melinda Moore Gottschalk MPAS PA-C DFAAPA
- [melindagpac@gmail.com](mailto:melindagpac@gmail.com)





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