

BMAT ESSAY

2017, Q3



TIMING ⌚ 30m

HEALTHCARE AND AGEING

The health care profession is wrong to treat ageing as if it were a disease.
What do you understand by this statement? Argue that it is not wrong to treat the effects of ageing as if they were a disease. To what extent do you agree with the statement?



ESSAY PLAN

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EXPLAIN WHAT IS MEANT BY THIS STATEMENT

- The statement is suggesting that ageing is a physiological process which is normal and a part of life - it should not be classified as a disease
- Ageing is a process of growing old as opposed to a disorder of structure or function in a human (definition of a disease)
- There is sufficient scientific evidence to target certain mechanisms which lead to ageing
- The author believes we should not treat ageing as something that can be treated or prevented



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IT IS NOT WRONG TO TREAT AGEING

- As we get older, our cells stop working as well and can break down, leading to conditions like cancer, Parkinson's, heart disease, arthritis and Alzheimer's disease.
- Even if aging is not a disease itself, the individual processes do lead to pathology and age-related diseases. This means that knowing that these processes create the conditions for diseases to develop, it makes sense to target the processes themselves in order to potentially prevent or treat a slew of age-related diseases at once.
- Together, ageing-related diseases are responsible for 100,000 deaths per day and billions are spent around the world trying to slow their steady march on our bodies.
- The NHS is restricted by budget and a large proportion is devoted to treating diseases which affect an older generation - it would reduce the burden and redistribute funds to other areas



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TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU AGREE?

- Ageing and death is something that is inevitable - if the population continued to survive for a long period of time, we would not be able to cope with the demands of the population
- Ageing should be looked at in a positive manner. In the healthcare profession, those who are older are discriminated against and are seen as 'diseased' - they should be treated just as someone who is younger
- There is not enough money in the NHS to cater for all diseases therefore if we medicalise ageing as well it will put further strain on our resources. It is difficult to draw a line on who can be treated and what condition should be treated and adding ageing to the disease will make this dilemma worse
- However, it is important we cater for an ageing population. Care of the elderly is an important facet of the NHS and with sufficient social care, those who are most vulnerable in the population are able to access good healthcare.

