

Abstract

The current study aims to investigate the underlying mechanism of how subjective age influences the practice of healthy lifestyle behaviors (exercise, nutrition, and health responsibility) among the older population in Hong Kong. A moderated mediation model was put forward with health self-efficacy playing a mediating role in the relationship between subjective age and healthy lifestyle behaviors and self-perceptions of aging as a moderator of the aforementioned indirect relationship. A sample of 65 Chinese older adults aged 60 or above was recruited to complete a survey between January and March 2022. From the results of the survey, a significant effect of subjective age on healthy lifestyle behaviors was observed with health self-efficacy fully mediating such effect while the moderating effect of self-perceptions of aging on this indirect relationship was non-significant. Further analysis discovered a serial mediation path in which subjective age exerted its effect on healthy lifestyle behaviors through self-perceived health status and health self-efficacy in a serial manner. These findings help explain the pathway through which subjective age influences our behaviors with an emphasis on the subjective components of health. Future directions were also suggested for studying the health-promoting effect of subjective age and its corresponding mechanism.

Keywords: Health behaviors, Older Chinese adults, Self-efficacy, Subjective aging