

Elderly on the Streets

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As of 2016, nearly 67,000 of the people in found in homeless shelters were aged 62 or older. Even worse, between 2007 and 2016, the percentage of homeless people that were elderly increased by 48%. That's almost 22,000 more people on the streets in under a decade. When one thinks of old people, usually the thought of nursing homes and smiling grandmothers comes to mind. So why are so many elderlies alone and living on the streets?

As of now, the elderly that are aged above sixty-five aren't often found on the streets and in homeless shelters. This is because starting from age sixty-two, subsidized housing is offered. In addition, Medicare and Social Security benefits are offered when one turns sixty-five. The greatest risk of becoming homeless comes to the elderly aged between fifty to sixty-four years old. An average working middle-aged man will eventually turn into an average working *old* man. This man will feel his body and health deteriorating but will be *fifteen years* too young to qualify for Medicare.

Without any way to care for their health, they continue working, but with their body under much more strain and stress, it will rapidly age until it resembles that of a person up to twenty years older. Under these conditions, they may even lose their job, causing them to lose their income and get thrown onto the streets. Being homeless will take a toll on your mind and body, so it will be extremely hard for these people to find another job when they're more worried

about finding their next meal. Even more, without proper health care, these seniors can develop health conditions that *prevent* them from being re-employed. Therefore, many homeless people are forced to stay homeless.

Even those with benefits from the government can find themselves sleeping on the sidewalks. In fact, most homeless elderly above sixty-five *have* Social Security benefits, but that alone can't pay for food, water, electricity, and rent every month. A study taken in 2010 showed that the average monthly SSI payment per person was \$703, which definitely won't cover all the essentials. Even if the money provided by the government was enough, there is a severe lack of housing within these seniors' budgets. In short, the seniors either have no money or no available homes, both of which will force them to live without shelter.

Without more awareness on this topic, these people will never receive the help they need. If the authorities and nonprofit services are more aware of this crisis, there will be more help for these people to live more comfortable lives. In addition, the age for financial support from the government should be lowered so that old age will not be the sole reason for people to become homeless.

References

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