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Inclusive recruitment? Hiring discrimination against older workers

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Inclusive recruitment? Hiring discrimination against older workers

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Abstract
Addressing population ageing requires a rise in the activity rates of older workers. In this study, a field experiment for the period 2013-2015 in the UK, suggests that age discrimination persists at alarming levels. It shows that when two applicants engage in an identical job search, the older applicant would gain fewer invitations for interviews regardless of her/his experience or superiority for the appointment. The results also suggest that older applicants face higher occupational access constraints for blue-collar jobs than white-collar/pink-collar jobs, and that women face greater age discrimination than men. Worryingly, the outcomes suggest that older applicants gain poorer access to vacancies than younger applicants irrespective of written commitments to equal opportunities. The design of the study suggests that discrimination results from distaste for older applicants, which has not been eliminated by the introduction of anti-discrimination legislation. Eliminating ageism in recruitment requires organizations to adopt more inclusive HR policies at the earliest stages of the recruitment process. Social dialogue has a crucial role to play in shaping inclusive and discrimination free recruitment policies such that shared values and beliefs are not age-discriminatory but rather recognize the strengths and potential of workers from different age groups.

JEL Code: C93; C9; J14; J1

Keywords: Access to Occupations, Wages, Ageism, Women, Discrimination

1. Introduction

Although the growth in older age groups in national populations around the globe has been well documented, little attention has been given to the policies that will extend opportunities for older workers (Böhm et al. 2013; Posthuma and Guerrero 2013; Naegele and Walker 2011; Van Vianen et al. 2011). According to a 2015 Mercer survey of employers in the UK and Europe, "the vast majority (87%) of the survey respondents have not checked whether their people managers are hiring workers who are older than themselves, and of the remaining 13% of those that do measure it, more than half found that managers do not hire people older than themselves" (Mercer 2015). Also, according to the American Association of Retired Person career study (AARP 2014) on older workers, 64% of those surveyed say they have seen or experienced age discrimination in the workplace. The same study suggests that "more than one-third of older workers are not confident that they would find another job right away without having to take a pay cut or move (37%). Of those, about one in five (19%) say the reason they are not confident is due to age discrimination and 21% identify age limitations, such as feeling they are 'too old' or limited in some way because of their age." In addition, based on a 2014 global survey (Deloitte 2014) of business and HR leaders, 58% of executives reported that their organizations have "weak capabilities in providing programs for younger, older, and multi-generation workforces." These negative patterns could have a detrimental impact on older workers in the labor market.

Although the target set by the Europe 2020 Strategy to reach 75% employment of all Europeans aged 20-64 (by 2020), a 2011 European Policy Centre study suggests that only 46% of people aged 55-64 are in work; this drops to 11% of 65-69 years-olds and 5% of those aged 70-74 (European Policy Centre 2011). In all developed countries, life expectancy is increasing, fertility is decreasing and people are encouraged to worker longer in order pension promises to be sustainable (Age UK 2011). Unfortunately, efforts to extend working lives and to increase participation rates amongst older people may be undermined by age discrimination in labor markets (Age UK 2011). Discrimination remains a serious issue for older workers because employers' beliefs about the

effects of ageing on productivity and workplace performance are influenced by negative stereotypes (George et al. 2015; Age UK 2011; OECD 2004). These stereotypes suggest that older workers are less motivated, less adaptable, less healthy and more likely to be distracted by family caring responsibilities (Ng and Feldman 2012). However, meta-analyses suggest that the somewhat widespread belief that job performance declines with age is not strongly supported: indeed, many studies point to performance increments with increasing age (Ng and Feldman 2012; Van Vianen et al. 2011; Ng and Feldman 2008; Sturman 2003; Warr 1994). In addition, according to the literature, emotional resilience has not been shown to be generally related to age (Ng and Feldman 2012; Sturman 2003; Warr 1994) and also, the widespread stereotypical view that older workers are less innovative than younger workers is not supported (Ng and Feldman 2012; Van Vianen et al. 2011; Ng and Feldman 2008; Sturman 2003; Warr 1994).

In order to eliminate age discrimination in the workplace, the UK implemented European Union legislation in the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006. These were superseded by the Equality Act 2010 which came fully into effect in 2012. This study evaluates whether the legislation has been effective. In the current study, we examine potential demand-side barriers to older UK men and women finding employment by exploring recruitment behavior, specifically invitations to interview, by utilizing an experimental technique; the so-called correspondence test. We focus on recruitment as it is the first stage of the HRM cycle and is a critical feature of HR processes in all organizations, regardless of size, structure of location. Decisions made in recruitment are fundamental to how effectively the workforce contributes to organizational objectives. Inclusive recruitment and discrimination free selection are a necessary condition for organizational HRM systems becoming Circles of Inclusion.

Unfortunately, age discrimination is neither overt nor easily measured (Riach and Rich 2007; 2002). Surveys of attitudes towards target groups and employers in the labor market are not likely to produce honest and accurate responses (Riach and Rich 2002). As a result, the lack of direct evidence regarding a recruitment bias against older people might limit our knowledge of the

actual extent of the discrimination that such people may face in the initial stage of the recruitment process and discriminatory patterns might remain unchallenged. However, field experiments which minimize bias and catch employers in the act of discrimination provide impressive direct evidence of recruitment bias from a powerful test procedure that enables clear policy adoption (Drydakis 2009).

The current study's results, the first since the Equality Act 2010, suggests that discrimination against older workers remains an important phenomenon. Legislation has not been sufficient to eliminate age discrimination in recruitment. Furthermore, ageism is not gender and occupation-neutral. The results highlight that government should require firms to adopt ageing-at-work policies that explicitly cover all stages of the recruitment process. Social dialogue between employers and employee representatives has a crucial role to play in effectively operationalizing national regulation at an organizational level. Constructive social dialogue has the potential to both promote changes in attitudes towards older workers and in informing effective organizational policies and procedures to eliminate ageism in recruitment. In what follows (Section 2), we will present the design of the study. The results will be presented (Section 3) followed by discussion of the implications (Section 4) and conclusions (Section 5).

2. Design of the study

Following the methodology of a typical field experiment (Drydakis 2009; Riach and Rich 2002) pairs of matched applications (one from a fictitious 28-year-old male/female applicant and one from a fictitious 50-year-old male/female applicant) were sent to employers with a variety of job openings for restaurant workers, sales assistants, factory workers and office secretaries. Firms' responses to the applicants, i.e. invitations for interview, were then recorded. As in most field experiments on age discrimination, we suggest that if preferences were found for younger applicants with 19 years less experience, it would indicate a very significant level of bias against older applicants (Riach and Rich 2002; 2007). However, if we were to find preferences for the older

applicants in such circumstances, it could be interpreted as an economically rational response to experience superiority, rather than bias against youth (Riach and Rich 2002; 2007).

In the present study, we concentrate on low-skilled jobs in the private sector as this group is expected to be more at risk for age discrimination (Eurobarometer 2007). The labor market demand in these occupations was also sufficiently high. These occupations almost always have fixed pay scales, often advertised with the vacancy, such that potential employers will not perceive older applicants as likely to expect higher wages as younger applicants. It was extremely important to choose job openings where it was realistic to expect that job applications would come from individuals 22 years apart in age range. Hence, jobs with a career hierarchy (i.e. managers, directors) were ruled out of the investigation. The selected occupations allow a further dimension to be investigated (Drydakis 2009) since jobs in industry (i.e. factory/manual workers) are perceived as blue-collar jobs, while jobs in services (such as in restaurant/sales and offices) are perceived as pink-collar and white-collar jobs. Finally, by focusing on both sexes, we can account for how gender might affect access to vacancies (Drydakis 2015).

The current research was administered as part of the Longitudinal Labor Market Discrimination Study (LLMDS) conducted by Anglia Ruskin University (Lord Ashcroft International Business School) in the UK. The LLMDS is an ongoing longitudinal yearly data set beginning in 2012. In this study, we applied for vacancies where there was demand for employment of 8 hours a day, 5 days a week. We applied to 1,836 available jobs in the selected occupations from July 2013 to May 2015, in the UK. These vacancies were identified through a random sample of advertisements appearing in both leading, as well as local, newspaper websites. We applied only to companies that accepted applications via email. Whenever firms invited the applicants for an interview, it was recorded as a call-back (Drydakis 2009). Invitations to interviews were politely declined to minimize the inconvenience to the firms (Drydakis 2009).

As in most EU field experiments, the applications consisted of three parts (Drydakis 2015). Firstly, a message in the email that simply stated that the applicant was applying for the vacant job and that an application letter and a CV were attached. Secondly, an application letter that described the applicant in a narrative form. The letter continued with the applicant stating that he/she had seen the announcement for the job opening and was interested in obtaining the position. The letter contained information about the applicant's age and work experience. It included the applicant's contact information (mail), date of birth, sex (male/female), ethnicity (White-British), marital status (married, one child), previous employment and education (both applicants had completed school to Year Eleven). The postal addresses were in comparable socio-economic districts, approximately one mile apart in each region. Thirdly, CVs for waiters, salesmen/saleswomen, factory workers and office secretaries were prepared, in conjunction with advice from relevant HR departments. Information was carefully matched between the two applications and altered for the four different targeted occupations. Working with HR departments, we conducted internal pre-tests to ensure that neither the two cover letters nor the CVs that formed a pair would elicit preferences.

The aim of this study was to create pairs of job applicants who were carefully matched in all respects except in the experience inevitably associated with age (Drydakis 2009). The younger applicant was 28 years of age. Also, the letter stated that the younger applicant had 9 years of work experience in the specific occupation. The older applicant was 50 years of age and the letter stated that the older applicant had 28 years of work experience in the specific occupation. As in most field experiments, we controlled for the older applicant's mental and physical capacities (Riach and Rich 2002; 2007). Older applicants were engaged in strenuous physical activity (i.e. cycling, mountain-biking) to demonstrate their current good health and to reduce potential employers perceiving older applicants as at higher risk than younger applicants of future ill health. Their mental flexibility was demonstrated by an up-to date interest in computers and learning foreign languages (i.e. Spanish) (Riach and Rich 2002; 2007). The reason for so doing is that numerous studies point to negative employer perceptions vis-à-vis older workers, with respect to their productivity, cost, work

motivation, current health, future health risks, receptiveness towards training and ability to cope with technological and organizational change (OECD 2004). Moreover, in this study, we indicated that the applicants were currently in employment so that all applicants had current experience at some form of work, thus diminishing fears that older workers had a longer time for human capital to deteriorate.

For research purposes, we also recorded the characteristics of the firms, such as the existence of HR and written commitments to equal opportunity (Drydakis 2009; 2015). To collect this specific information, we adopted the following process: if a job opening or a firm's official website indicated a job or firm, the information was registered. When limited information was provided, research assistants contacted the firms and collected the relevant data, stating that they were engaged in a university study of the firm environments behind advertised job openings (Drydakis 2009; 2015).

3. Results

The primary question we asked was, "What constitutes an outcome that exhibits discrimination?" In a study of majority/minority employment opportunities, an intuitively plausible measure of (the existence of) discrimination is the proportion of times that the two applicants were treated differently by potential employers (Riach and Rich 2002). Complete results thus necessitate recording when both were rejected or invited and when only the majority or minority applicant was invited to interview (Riach and Rich 2002).

Table 1 summarizes the data and the results of our experiment. We present outcomes of firms who did not respond to either of the applicants (neither invited for interview); firms who responded positively to at least one applicant (at least one invited); firms who responded positively to both of the applicants (both invited); firms who responded positively only to the younger 28-year-old applicant (only the younger was invited) and firms who responded positively to only the

older 50-year-old applicant (only the older was invited). The results are presented for the total sample, by occupation, and sex.

Table 1, Panel I, presents observations for men. The last row shows the aggregated results and from the second column it can be seen that applications were sent to 894 job openings. The third column shows that in 509 cases, neither individual was invited for interview. In the remaining 385 cases (column four), at least one applicant was invited. In 57 cases (column five), both applicants were invited (equal treatments); in 258 cases (column six) only the younger applicant was invited and in 70 cases (column seven) only the older applicant was invited. Hence, net discrimination (Drydakis 2009) against the older applicant can be read from the last two columns and represents 188 cases (48.8%). The outcome is statistically significant. In other words, the younger male applicant was approximately 3.6 times more likely than the older male applicant (i.e. 258 cases versus 70 cases) to receive an invitation for a job interview.

In Panel I, it is also observed that older applicants were found to face the highest occupational access constraints for factory/manual jobs, which constitute the lower-status sector (blue-collar) in our sample. To be specific, the net discrimination against the older applicant is 28 cases (65.1%). That is, for factory/manual jobs, the younger male applicant was approximately 6.4 times more likely than the older male applicant (i.e. 33 cases versus 5 cases) to receive an invitation for a job interview. In Panel I, it is also observed that in office jobs (white-collar occupations), net discrimination against the older applicant is 59 cases (42.7%); in restaurant vacancies net discrimination against the older applicant is 43 cases (43.0%) and in shop sales, net discrimination against the older applicant is 58 cases (55.7%). In all cases, the outcomes are statistically significant.

Panel II presents observations for women. In 192 cases (column six) only the younger applicant was invited and in 36 cases (column seven), only the older applicant was invited. Hence, net discrimination against the older applicant is 156 cases (54.3%). The outcome is statistically

significant. The younger female applicant was approximately 5.3 times more likely than the older female applicant (i.e. 192 cases versus 36 cases) to receive an invitation for a job interview. Furthermore, it is observed that older female applicants were faced with the highest occupational access constraints for factory/manual jobs: that is, net discrimination against the older applicant is 24 cases (77.4%). In Panel II, it is also observed that in office jobs (white-collar occupations), net discrimination against the older applicant is 49 cases (50.0%); in restaurant vacancies net discrimination against the older applicant is 42 cases (47.1%) and in shop sales, net discrimination against the older applicant is 41 cases (59.4%). In all cases, the outcomes are statistically significant.

Interestingly, in Table 2 we report the results for the sub-set of applicants whose resumes were submitted to firms wherein HR departments (a) existed or (b) did not exist. In Table 2 Panel I, the net rate of discrimination against the older applicant in the case of the firms having HR was 49.1%. On the other hand, the net rate of discrimination against the older applicant in the case of the firms not having HR was 54.5%. In both cases, the outcomes are statistically significant. In Table 3, we also observe that the net rate of discrimination against the older applicant in the case of firms providing written commitments to equal opportunity was 33.0%. The outcome is statistically significant. The patterns suggest that the existence of HR departments, as well as the provision of written commitments to equal opportunities, retain statistically significant discriminatory patterns for the older applicant.

4. Discussion and implications for organizations and social partners

The results suggest that discrimination in recruitment against older workers in the UK continues at alarming levels. It continues despite the introduction of the Equality Act 2010. Older workers must spend more time and resources finding jobs and firms may lose potential talent through biased recruitment practices. These results support the findings of other field experiments

that indicate the existence of ageism in the recruitment process in other countries, such as in the US (Lahey 2008), in Sweden (Ahmed et al. 2012), in France (Riach and Rich 2006) and in Spain (Albert et al. 2011).

In addition, the results suggest that older women are more discriminated against than men (also found by Neumark et al. (2015) for the US) and manual workers more than non-manual workers. These patterns accord with stereotypical beliefs that the physical strengths and job performance of women and manual workers decline earlier than for men and white-collar workers (Böhm et al. 2013; Colin and Loretto 2004). Furthermore, white/pink-collar workers might have clear advantages compared to blue-collar workers (less likely to show signs of exhaustion, more valuable administrative experience, more able to effectively weigh up alternatives). Thus, gender and occupational heterogeneity seem to be factors that moderate ageism and require further attention.

A clear understanding of the nature of age discrimination is essential to derive policies from this analysis. Based on Taste theory of discrimination (Becker 1957), if employers, co-workers and/or consumers have tendencies towards discrimination and can distinguish older workers from younger, the result may be discriminatory treatment. In addition, based on the Statistical discrimination (Arrow 1973) if, in general, it is true that there is a systematic differential between the older and younger applicants in their productivity, this is sufficient to create a permanent differential in occupational access. In this situation, discrimination is not the consequence of exogenous preferences (distastes) but of profit-maximizing behavior of risk-averse employers. In practice, if Taste-based discrimination (Becker 1957) accounts for lower occupational access for older people, then anti-discrimination legislation may be the appropriate response. However, if Statistical discrimination is important (Arrow 1973), then a better means of assessing workers' productivity (i.e. through diagnostic tests) may contribute to the reduction of discrimination at the individual or group level. Importantly, in the current study we have controlled for the older applicants' mental and physical capacities. Hence, it might be that firms may not invite older

applicants to be interviewed, thus equalizing the unit costs of labor after factoring the distaste towards older people. Thus, in this study, evidence was found to support Taste-based discrimination as a reason for ageism and not Statistical discrimination, despite anti-discrimination legislation having been introduced.

4.1 Inclusive HR policies begin at the recruitment stage

Much of the existing work into the effects of ageing workforces has focused on adapting HR processes and policies for organizations' existing workforces. For example: The effect of job-related health problems on age/performance relations suggests adapting management of workers physical, mental and social health should be a critical priority (Posthuma and Guerrero 2013; Naegele and Walker 2011); Offering older workers renewed stimulation at key points in their careers may help to maintain high levels of commitment and skills (Ng and Feldman 2008; Sturman 2003); Introducing flexible working-time arrangements to avoid demotivation and early exit from the workforce, especially for women (Posthuma and Guerrero 2013).

A clear focus on anti-discrimination policies and inclusion would result in a circle in which unbiased recruitments would promote inclusive practices, which, in turn, would promote a greater diversity of people drawn to join the workforce. If efforts to extend working lives and to increase participation rates amongst older people are to be successful, adapting HR policies to accommodate the aging of only existing workers is not sufficient. Older workers must also have equal access to vacancies in the recruitment process. Despite the existence of anti-discriminatory legislation, there remains widespread discrimination against older workers at an early stage of the recruitment process. HR policies can create behaviors in organizations and the right practices can encourage more inclusive behaviors. These practices should be focused on recruitment, career development, work design, etc.

As the results in Table 2 show, the existence of an HR department is not sufficient to eliminate age discrimination in recruitment. Even in firms with HR departments, younger applicants are four times as likely to receive an interview as older applicants (i.e. 274 cases versus 68). These results reinforce previous findings that workforce ageing is often viewed negatively by HR practitioners, focusing on difficulties and conflicts instead of potential and opportunities (Naegele and Walker 2011). Interestingly, whilst firms with written commitments to equal opportunities (Table 3) still showed statistically significant rates of net discrimination against older applicants, the level of net discrimination was reduced. Net discrimination was reduced because, if any applicant was invited to interview, firms with written commitments to equality were far more likely to invite both applicants than firms without written commitments. Where at least one applicant was invited for interview, firms with written commitments invited both in 46.4% of cases against 17.3% of cases for firms without written commitments.

Our results show that current HR recruitment policies fail to prevent discrimination against older applicants. Inclusive HR policies must begin at the recruitment stage. Firms should not only actively solicit applications from older applicants (Lievens et al. 2012) but also ensure that they are fairly considered once received.

Age discrimination in recruitment should not be considered in isolation. It should be seen in the context of other characteristics such as race, gender, socioeconomic background, ethnicity and disability that may be discriminated against in recruitment. As we show for the case of gender, these characteristics are likely to moderate the effects of ageism. It is those firms with written commitments to equality (and across all characteristics rather than just age) who display the lowest levels of net discrimination. Firms need to ensure that shared values and beliefs, as well as policies, practices and procedures are not age-discriminatory but recognize the strengths and potentials of workers from different age groups (Naegele and Walker 2011). The government should require firms to have ageing-at-work policies (Naegele and Walker 2011) but such policies need to explicitly address all stages of the recruitment process.

Inclusive HR policies must recognize both that older workers may maintain (or improve) productivity across their working lives in way that compensate for reduced physical ability (Ng and Feldman 2012) and that there exists, on average, (perhaps unconscious) taste-based bias against older workers amongst recruiters which is unrelated applicants' productivities. There must be less reliance on chronological age and greater use of intrinsic predictors of job performance, such as use of job analysis and specific performance tests (Naegele and Walker 2011). Clearly, those conducting interviews need to be trained to carry out age-sensitive selection processes. Our results show that discrimination occurs prior to this, when selecting which applicants are interviewed. Similar training is necessary for those involved in selecting interviewees though there is little evidence yet as to the effectiveness of such training relating to age discrimination (Lievens et al. 2012). Avoiding revealing age at the application stage (or details from which age might be inferred such as extensive experience, dates of qualifications, etc.) would reduce opportunities for recruiters to discriminate against older applicants.

4.2 Social dialogue to promote fair recruitment

The results of this study show how much work needs to be done to address age discrimination in the labor market. We found evidence strongly suggestive of discrimination taste-based age discrimination, despite European and national regulation aimed making such practice unlawful. Eliminating such age discrimination in recruitment requires not only a fundamental change in attitudes and behaviors towards older workers by recruiters, but also recruiting organizations designing and implementing effective policies and procedures (Collin 2005). This suggests a key role for constructive and informed social dialogue in improving recruitment practices. Its importance lies in ensuring that within organizations both sides (employers and workers) can represent their interests and, through discussion, arrive at practices beneficial for all. It is only through social dialogue and cooperation between both parties in workplaces that recruitment issues such as age discrimination, can be highlighted and resolved.

Social dialogue should be an integral part of the process of changing attitudes and establishing more inclusive workplaces, as it gives the opportunity for parties to raise issues and negotiate solutions. Cooperative social dialogue between employers and employee representatives offers the greatest opportunities for developing HR policies at the organizational level to confront and eliminate age discrimination in recruitment (Bryson et al. 2012). Effective social dialogue requires effective representation of both employers and workers. The UK is distinct from other European countries in having much lower levels of formal employee representation at the organizational level (Martinez-Lucio and Keizer 2015). This lack of effective employee representation is especially acute for the low-skilled occupations, private sector roles that form our sample. These have notably low levels of union membership, and the UK has traditionally relied solely on unions as the channel for employee representation (Euwema et al. 2015).

Developing inclusive recruitment policies is in the interests of both employers, who may otherwise overlook the most productive applicants to vacancies and increasingly so as workforces age, and employees, who will become older applicants in the future. On the issue of age discrimination, there exist incentives, recognizing their shared interests, to develop cooperatively orientated relations between employers and employee representatives. Developing cooperative relations require investments by both parties (Euwema et al. 2015). The primary challenge, especially in the UK, but more generally across Europe is cultivating effective employee representation at the level of the organization. If mechanisms can be developed to ensure effective, competent and trustworthy employee representation, whether through the unions or not, cooperative social dialogue offers the opportunity to employers, employees and potential employees put forward their claims for a fairer, more inclusive and more efficient recruitment practices. Developing inclusive recruitment policies to address age discrimination will not only protect older workers and job candidates. As our results show, age discrimination is moderated by characteristics such as gender. Recruitment policies that are inclusive for one characteristic are likely to be more inclusive for all characteristics. Hence, social dialogue is an essential condition for an inclusive work

environment as it allows arguments for special cases within the workforce to be presented, and solutions developed, within each organization's environment (Collin 2005).

Of course, relations and dialogue between employers and employees are affected and defined by society-wide beliefs and norms. Norms in the workplace follow society-wide ethical norms and as such there can be delay in adoption and application. Ageism and age discrimination has only recently become part of the ethical discourse and, notwithstanding regulatory changes, our results suggest that informal workplace behavior is yet to adapt. As norms evolve, discrimination against older workers in the labor market will reduce over time. However, such adaptation can take decades as, for example in the case of gender discrimination (Phillips 1998). The pressures of population aging make swift adaptation imperative. An active older population enjoying equal treatments in the labor market will be better able to help build the social and economic capital of their countries (Age UK 2011).

5. Conclusions

This study has provided strong evidence of age bias due to distastes against older applicants at the first stage of the recruitment process in the UK for the 2013-2015 period. The results, based on a sample of low-skilled occupations, suggest that, despite the introduction of the Equality Act 2010, many employers reject applications from individuals because they have reached the age of 50. Furthermore, the results indicate that women and those in blue-collar occupations are at greater disadvantage compared to men and those in white/pink-collar occupations. The results of this study highlight that a history of discrimination is not reversed overnight by passing legislation. Nor do the existence of HR departments or written commitments to equal opportunities by firms eliminate discrimination against older people. As the baby boom cohort reaches retirement age, social programs face looming funding crises (Lehay 2008; OECD 2004). One often-suggested solution is to encourage older workers to remain in the labor force, so that benefits can be cut without

compromising living standards. Simply encouraging older people to re-enter the labor force may not guarantee that they will be able to find jobs in a timely manner, if at all. Our study has shown that older people must spend more time, effort and resources than younger people to obtain an interview.

Social dialogue between social planners and trade unions can play an important role in effectively operationalizing national regulation at an organizational level. Social dialogue should ask for open dialogue and constructive negotiations between management, trade unions and employee representatives in order to promote a change of attitudes, behaviors and competences on diversity and social inclusion, and develop effective organizational responses in terms of policies and procedural aspects to improve inclusion of older people at workplaces.

Finally, it is important to consider that the study's results should be evaluated while considering the characteristics of the experiment and data set. Our study has focused on the recruitment stage and has ignored potential discrimination that could arise later on. We have focused on only a few low-skilled occupations, applicant profiles and regions. Consequently, firm generalizations are not possible. One may need to consider additional occupations, applicants with heterogeneous human capital and demographic characteristics and countries. These should be interesting new studies.

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Table 1. Aggregate outcomes; Access to occupations

Panel I: Men									
Outcomes Jobs	Jobs	Neither Invited	At least one invited	Both invited	Only the younger was invited	Only the older was invited	Net Discrimination (2)-(3)	[(2)-(3)]/(1) %	χ^2 test
			(1)		(2)	(3)			
Factory workers	151	108	43	5	33	5	28	65.1	20.6*
Sales assistants	235	131	104	12	75	17	58	55.7	36.5*
Restaurant workers	245	145	100	13	65	22	43	43.0	21.2*
Office secretaries	263	125	138	27	85	26	59	42.7	31.3*
Total	894	509	385	57	258	70	188	48.8	107.7*
Panel II: Women									
Outcomes Occupations	Jobs	Neither Invited	At least one invited	Both invited	Only the younger was invited	Only the older was invited	Net Discrimination (2)-(3)	[(2)-(3)]/(1) %	χ^2 test
			(1)		(2)	(3)			
Factory workers	163	132	31	5	25	1	24	77.4	22.1*
Sales assistants	232	163	69	12	49	8	41	59.4	29.4*
Restaurant workers	266	177	89	21	55	13	42	47.1	25.9*
Office secretaries	281	183	98	21	63	14	49	50.0	31.1*
Total	942	655	287	59	192	36	156	54.3	106.7*

Notes: 2013-2015 UK Longitudinal Labour Market Discrimination Study data set. The null hypothesis is "Both individuals are treated unfavorably equally often," that is, (2) = (3). The critical value of the x^2 at the 1% level of significance is 6.635(*).

Table 2. Aggregate Outcomes; Access to occupations; Men and Women

Panel I: Firms having HR									
Outcomes	Jobs	Neither Invited	At least one invited	Both invited	Only the younger was invited	Only the older was invited	Net Discrimination (2)-(3)	[(2)-(3)]/(1) %	χ^2 test
			(1)		(2)	(3)			
Total	1,157	738	419	77	274	68	206	49.1	124.0*
Panel II: Firms not having HR									
Outcomes	Jobs	Neither Invited	At least one invited	Both invited	Only the younger was invited	Only the older was invited	Net Discrimination (2)-(3)	[(2)-(3)]/(1) %	χ^2 test
			(1)		(2)	(3)			
Total	679	426	253	39	176	38	138	54.5	88.9*

Notes: 2013-2015 UK Longitudinal Labour Market Discrimination Study data set. The null hypothesis is "Both individuals are treated unfavorably equally often," that is, (2) = (3). The critical value of the x^2 at the 1% level of significance is 6.635(*).

Table 3. Aggregate Outcomes; Men and Women

Firms that provide written commitments to equal opportunities									
Outcomes	Jobs	Neither Invited	At least one invited	Both invited	Only the younger was invited	Only the older was invited	Net Discrimination (2)-(3)	[(2)-(3)]/(1) %	χ^2 test
			(1)		(2)	(3)			
Total	457	265	192	89	84	19	65	33.8	41.0*

Notes: 2013-2015 UK Longitudinal Labour Market Discrimination Study data set. The null hypothesis is "Both individuals are treated unfavorably equally often," that is, (2) = (3). The critical value of the x^2 at the 1% level of significance is 6.635(*).