

Setting Priorities for Gerontological Social Work Research: A National Delphi Study

Burnette et al. (2003)

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For which topic were research priorities identified?

gerontological social work

In which location was the research priority setting conducted?

North America - USA

Why was it conducted at all?

An increasingly important task for all disciplines involved in aging research is to identify and prioritize areas for investigation. demographic shift poses both opportunities and challenges, and progress in biomedical, social, and behavioral research has surely enhanced opportunities and improved the lives of many older adults. Focused research agendas are needed within and across disciplines to guide investigations of this new phase of the human journey (Fahey, 1996, p. 41). Such agendas will help maximize available resources by honing a multiplicity of broad and legitimate interests to the most pressing gaps in basic and applied knowledge in gerontology. Establishing a prioritized research agenda will help focus, organize, and synthesize the work of these and future social work researchers in aging.

What was the objective?

to set research priorities for gerontological social work

What was the outcome?

a ranking list of 16 research topics

How long did the research prioritization take?

No information provided.

Which methods were used to identify research priorities?

Delphi

How were the priorities for research identified exactly?

Step 1: Delphi round 1: participants were asked to list up to 5 high-priority research topics for gerontological social work and to provide a rationale for each choice, 181 topics submitted. Step 2: data processing: coding topics into categories, list 49 discrete research topics compiled. Step 3: Delphi round 2: participants were asked to rate importance of each of the 49 topics and to identify and rank order the 5 topics they judged to be highest priority, topic with low priority were dropped for next round, the remaining 35 topics were conceptually reorganized into 12 broad subheadings. Step 4: Delphi round 3: participants were asked to re-rate based on own and group ratings

Which stakeholders took part?

Gerontological social work experts. 46 participants in each Delphi round.

How were stakeholders recruited?

To identify stakeholders, the authors began with an electronic listserv of 62 gerontological social work experts compiled for the Hartford Geriatric Social Work Scholars program. The listserv comprises academic-based researchers, national leaders in social work and aging organizations, and associates of the John A. Hartford Foundation. 62 individuals were invited to participate.

Were stakeholders actively involved or did they just participate?

Stakeholders were mere participants of the research prioritization process; they were not actively involved in the process.