

Job applicants over 40 filtered out by employers

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Job applicants are filtered out as early as age 40. This was shown by economist Stefan Eriksson at Uppsala University, one of the authors of a new report from the Institute for Evaluation of Labour Market and Education Policy (IFAU).

In the study, the researchers sent more than 6,000 fictitious job applications to employers who had posted job ads for administrators, chefs, cleaners, restaurant assistants, retail sales assistants, business sales agents and truck drivers to then compile the employers' responses, such as invitations to job interviews.

It turned out that [job applicants](#) who were middle-aged or older are often filtered out. The chance of being contacted by an [employer](#) decreases as early as age 40, and then decreases even more with increasing age. Almost nobody is contacted closer to [retirement age](#).

"There should be no doubt that the employers discriminate on the basis of age," says Magnus Carlsson, one of the report authors. "We find very large effects and age is really a negative factor in the recruitment process."

A questionnaire study directed at a selection of employers shows that there are three characteristics that the employers consider to be important and are worried that employees over the age of 40 have begun to lose: the ability to learn new things, being adaptable and flexible and being driven and taking initiative.

"Employers might believe that employees already begin to lose these abilities in middle age," says Stefan Eriksson, at the Department of Economics at Uppsala University.

Age discrimination can have a major impact on society, according to the authors of the report. Both considering that Sweden is facing a demographic challenge with an ageing population that needs to work longer and that [age discrimination](#) can result in reduced mobility in the workforce. If those who are middle-aged or older expect to be discriminated against, it may also keep them from applying for a new job. Low mobility can in turn inhibit development in the [labour market](#) and reduce growth in the economy.

More information: Do jobseekers' age and gender affect the chance of getting a response to a job application? Results of a field experiment. www.ifau.se/globalassets/pdf/s...a-en-jobbansokan.pdf

Provided by Uppsala University

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