

Attitudes of Aging

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For information, please contact:

Patty David, Senior Research Advisor, pdavid@aarp.org
G. Oscar Anderson, Research Advisor, ganderson@aarp.org
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Background and Objectives

Background/Objectives

- *AARP The Magazine* commissioned research regarding the attitudes of aging to support an article in an upcoming 2013 issue.
- The research was conducted in two phases: phase one was qualitative; phase two was quantitative.
- The qualitative research was initiated to help direct the quantitative portion by helping to better understand:
 - How adults 45+ feel about aging.
 - What defines age? Is it the way one looks or the way one feels?
 - The impact of the prejudices of aging (ageism).
 - The influence of society's opinions on the perceptions of aging.
 - The impact of life events on the perceptions of aging.
 - How social connectedness and technology impact perceptions of aging.
- Findings from the qualitative helped to frame attitudinal questions around aging in the quantitative survey in order to better answer the question, 'what aging attitudes drive the overall satisfaction with life'? Attitudinal questions centered around the following items that were uncovered in the qualitative research phase:
 - Psychological growth and loss
 - Health and physical changes
 - Everyday life
 - Discrimination and prejudices
 - Physical appearance
 - Traditional and online social networks
 - Technology
 - Treatment from others

Methodology

Quantitative Methodology

- Online survey conducted by Research Now using e-rewards online panel.
- Survey conducted over 4 days from December 17-20, 2012.
- Sample was comprised of ...adults 40 and older with quotas based on gender, age, and MME segments
 - Gender: 900 male/900 female
 - Age: 600 age 40-50, 600 age 51-60, 500 age 61-69, 100 age 70+
 - MME segments: at least 200 Hispanic, 200 African American and 100 Asian
- Eighteen hundred total responses
- Significance testing at the 95th percentile level; Margin of error +/-2.5%
- Data is unweighted and based on the sample pull and responses.
- Indicated key drivers is based on a regression analysis against overall satisfaction with life.

Executive Summary

Executive Summary – Definition of age and attitudes about aging that impact satisfaction with life

What is ‘old’? If ‘old’ is defined as an age, that definition is different depending on who you speak to.

- ✓ If speaking to an age cohort, ‘old’ gets defined as 10-15 years older than that cohort.
 - Those 51-60 year olds define old as 70 for men and 70 for women. However, those 70 or older define old as 75 for men and 78 for women.
- ✓ Men and women define ‘old’ for women differently. Men say women are ‘old’ at 68 while women say women are ‘old’ at 75.
- ✓ If speaking to someone based on health, those in poorer health feel that ‘old’ starts a lot earlier (60s vs. 70s).
- ✓ If speaking to someone based on their mom being alive or dead, those whose mom is alive feel that ‘old’ starts a lot earlier (60s vs. 70s).

The definition of ‘old’ aside, how do the attitudes that one has about aging impact their satisfaction with life? We’ve uncovered that attitudes that center around the following have the biggest impact on satisfaction with life:

- ✓ Just growing old and having a purpose in life
- ✓ Feelings of psychological loss (depression, loneliness, exclusion)
- ✓ Perceptions of current health
- ✓ Incidence of discrimination and prejudices
- ✓ Societal views about aging
- ✓ Feelings of connectedness
- ✓ Signs of respect as one ages
- ✓ How others react to and treat one based on appearance of age
- ✓ Importance of technology and its uses

Additionally, attitudes about aging differ by culture.

Executive Summary – How does each attitude about aging impact the satisfaction with life?

Attitude 1: Just growing old and having a purpose in life is important

- ✓ 'Aging is just another part of life' (89%) and 'having a purpose in life' (83%) are two significant drivers of overall satisfaction with life.
- ✓ The more one believes that their life has made a difference the more satisfied they are with life (80% vs. 33%).
- ✓ Additionally, the more one is accepting of themselves as they grow old, the more satisfied with life they are (78% vs. 48%).

Attitude 2: Feelings of psychological loss (depression, loneliness, exclusion) lead to less life satisfaction

- ✓ While only about twenty percent of adults 40 or older feel psychological loss, those that do are significantly less satisfied with life. They especially feel...
 - more excluded from things because of their age (80% vs. 46%, 34 percentage point difference)
 - that old age is a depressing time of life (81% vs. 47%, 34 percentage point difference), and
 - that old age is mainly a time of loss (79% vs. 51%, 32 percentage point difference)
- ✓ Since the death of someone close to you is mostly seen as a depressing time of loss, one would think that those who have experienced a death would be less satisfied with life. However...
 - those who have experienced a death of a friend are more satisfied than those who haven't experienced any deaths (76% vs. 69%), and
 - those who experienced a death of a relative or spouse are just as satisfied as those who have not experienced any deaths (69% respectively).

Executive Summary – How does each attitude about aging impact the satisfaction with life?

Attitude 3: Perceptions of current health

- ✓ The state of one's health is the **biggest** driver of satisfaction with life.
- ✓ Those who rate their health good are almost twice as satisfied with life (84%) as those who rate their health poorer (44%).
- ✓ Also, those in good health have larger support networks (8 vs. 5), feel 'old' starts at a later age (70 vs. 65 or 68), and feel exercise is important as well as keep as fit and active as possible.

Attitude 4: Incidences of discrimination and prejudices

- ✓ Discrimination and prejudices that exist in the workplace are key drivers of overall satisfaction with life. Specifically, 'employers looking for signs of vulnerability like age when deciding who to hire' (62%) significantly drives satisfaction with life.
 - As age hits 51 or above, this is felt more (Age 40-49: 55%, Age 50-59:63% to 73% for age 70 or older).
- ✓ Other forms of discrimination occur but are not seen as drivers of satisfaction with life, specifically:
 - comments about memory (39% occasionally encounter),
 - unasked for assistance (38% occasionally encounter),
 - doctors shrugging off symptoms (32% occasionally encounter), and
 - others becoming impatient while someone older is completing a task (23% occasionally encounter).

Executive Summary – How does each attitude about aging impact the satisfaction with life?

Attitude 5: Societal views about aging

- ✓ The key driver of satisfaction with life is the attitude that ‘American society is driven from the perspective of youth’ (61%).
 - As age increases this is felt more and more (Age 40-49:58% to 68% at age 70 or older)
 - Additionally, women are significantly more likely to feel this versus men (64% vs. 58%)
- ✓ While this attitude exists, it is important to note that over 40% of those 40 or older feel that as they grow older, things in their life are better than they thought they would be.

Attitude 6: Feelings of connectedness

- ✓ People can be connected by marriage/living with a partner or through support and personal networks.
- ✓ Those that are married or living with someone are significantly more satisfied with life (75% vs. 60%). They are also more likely to be in better health (68% vs. 50%) as well as to find that things in life are better as they grow older (48% vs. 27%).

Attitude 7: Signs of respect as one ages

- ✓ A key driver of satisfaction with life is getting more respect from others as we age (54%).
- ✓ Almost half of those 40 and older (46%) feel that they get too little respect from those that are younger and about 20% feel they get too little respect from those that are older.

Executive Summary – How does each attitude about aging impact the satisfaction with life?

Attitude 8: How others react to and treat one based on how old they appear

- ✓ Actual physical appearance features are not factors impacting satisfaction with life. However, the reaction/treatment from others based on the perception of one's age are. The following three have the most impact on the satisfaction with life:
 - Concern about how people will treat you when you get older (28%)
 - Feeling old when someone younger calls you ma'am or sir (28%)
 - Seeing younger people getting served more quickly in a store or restaurant (9%)
- ✓ Women and those in poorer health are significantly more impacted by these attitudes.

Attitude 9: Importance of technology and its uses

- ✓ The use of technology itself is not a driver of satisfaction with life. It's how the technology is used that drives satisfaction.
- ✓ The fact that the internet has brought people closer together to friends and family is the key driver of satisfaction (55%). The internet's ability to bring family and friends closer is also considered another point of connectedness.

Executive Summary – Cultural differences of attitudes about aging

Cultural differences of attitudes about aging exist

- ✓ While culture itself does not drive overall satisfaction with life, there are differences within each culture that impact their satisfaction with life.

- ✓ African Americans
 - Are more positive about growing older
 - Don't let physical problems hold them back
 - Feel that age demands respect

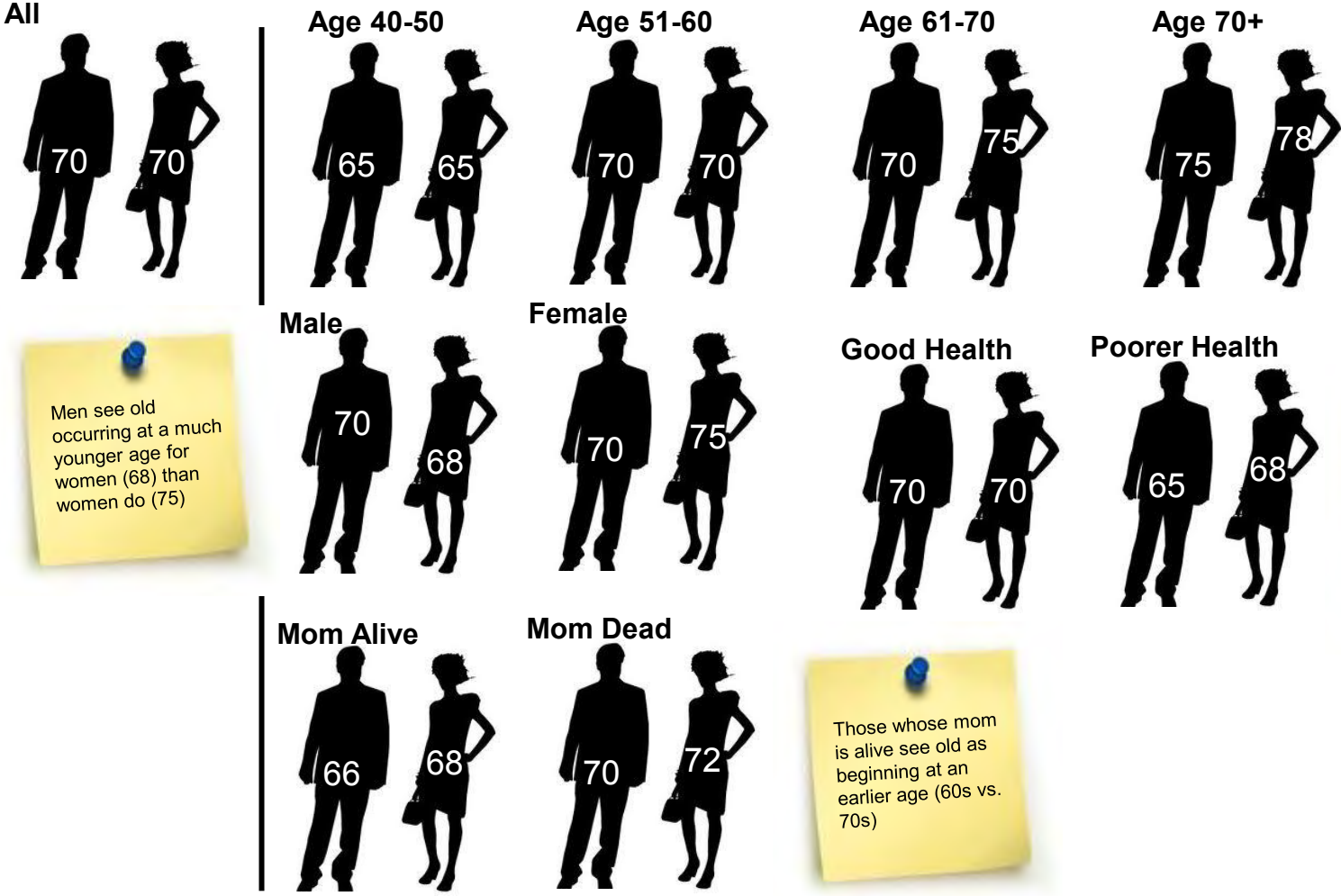
- ✓ Asians
 - Are more likely to see old age as a time of loneliness and depression
 - Are inclined to mislead people of their actual age and spend money and time to look younger
 - Are least likely to participate in social media sites and more likely to think they are for the young

- ✓ Hispanics
 - Are more likely to see aging as a time of losing physical independence
 - Are more likely to feel excluded from things because of age
 - Are more likely to feel invisible to younger people and society

Detailed Findings

On average, the age when a man or woman becomes old is 70. However, as one ages the age for 'old' increases, especially the age when a woman becomes old

Age at which a man/woman becomes old



Men see old occurring at a much younger age for women (68) than women do (75)

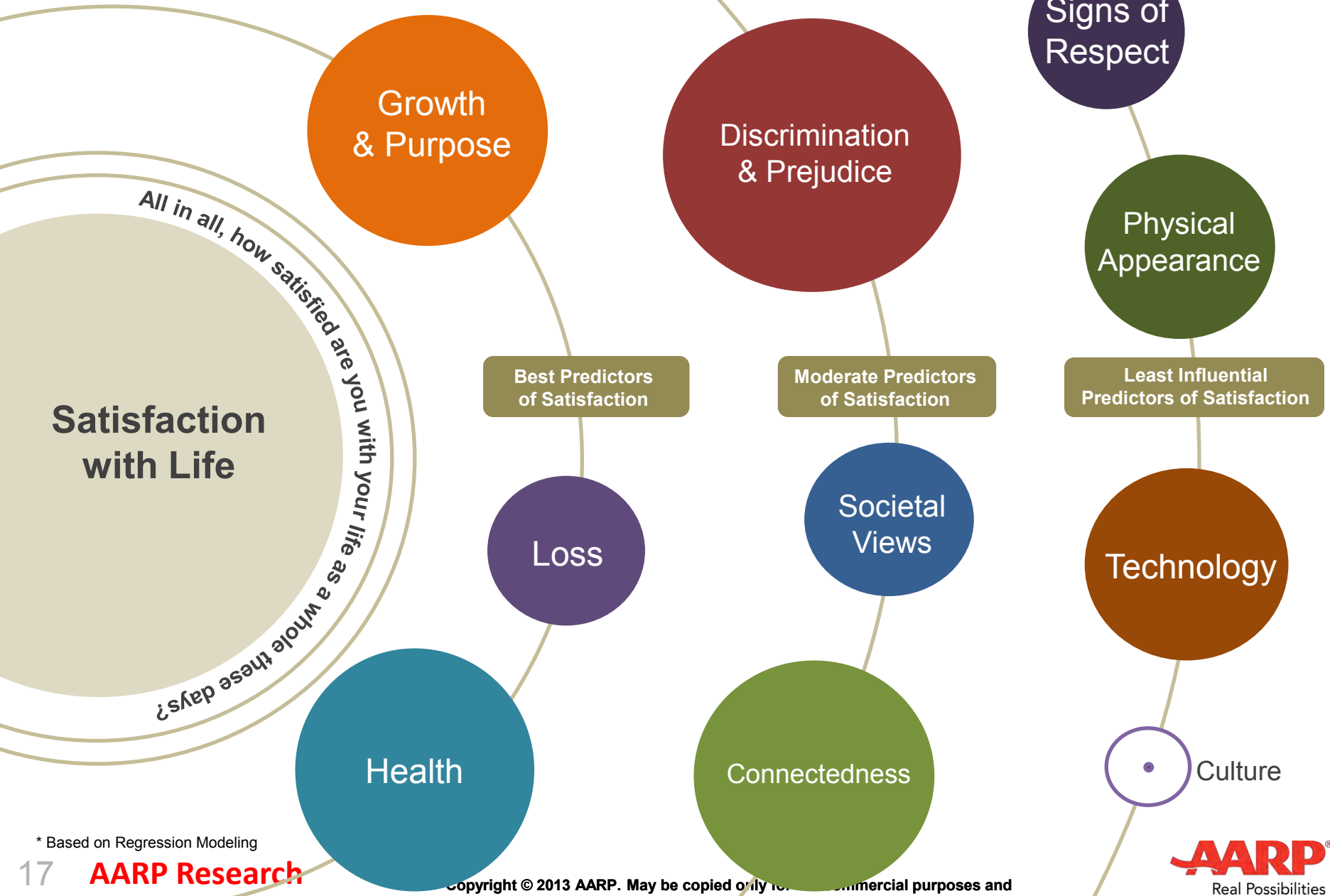
Those in poorer health see old as beginning at a younger age (60s vs. 70)

Those whose mom is alive see old as beginning at an earlier age (60s vs. 70s)

* Statistically significant difference

Drivers of Overall Satisfaction*

Different types of attitudes on aging drive older adults' overall satisfaction with life



Satisfaction with Life

All in all, how satisfied are you with your life as a whole these days?

Growth & Purpose

Discrimination & Prejudice

Signs of Respect

Physical Appearance

Best Predictors of Satisfaction

Moderate Predictors of Satisfaction

Least Influential Predictors of Satisfaction

Loss

Societal Views

Technology

Health

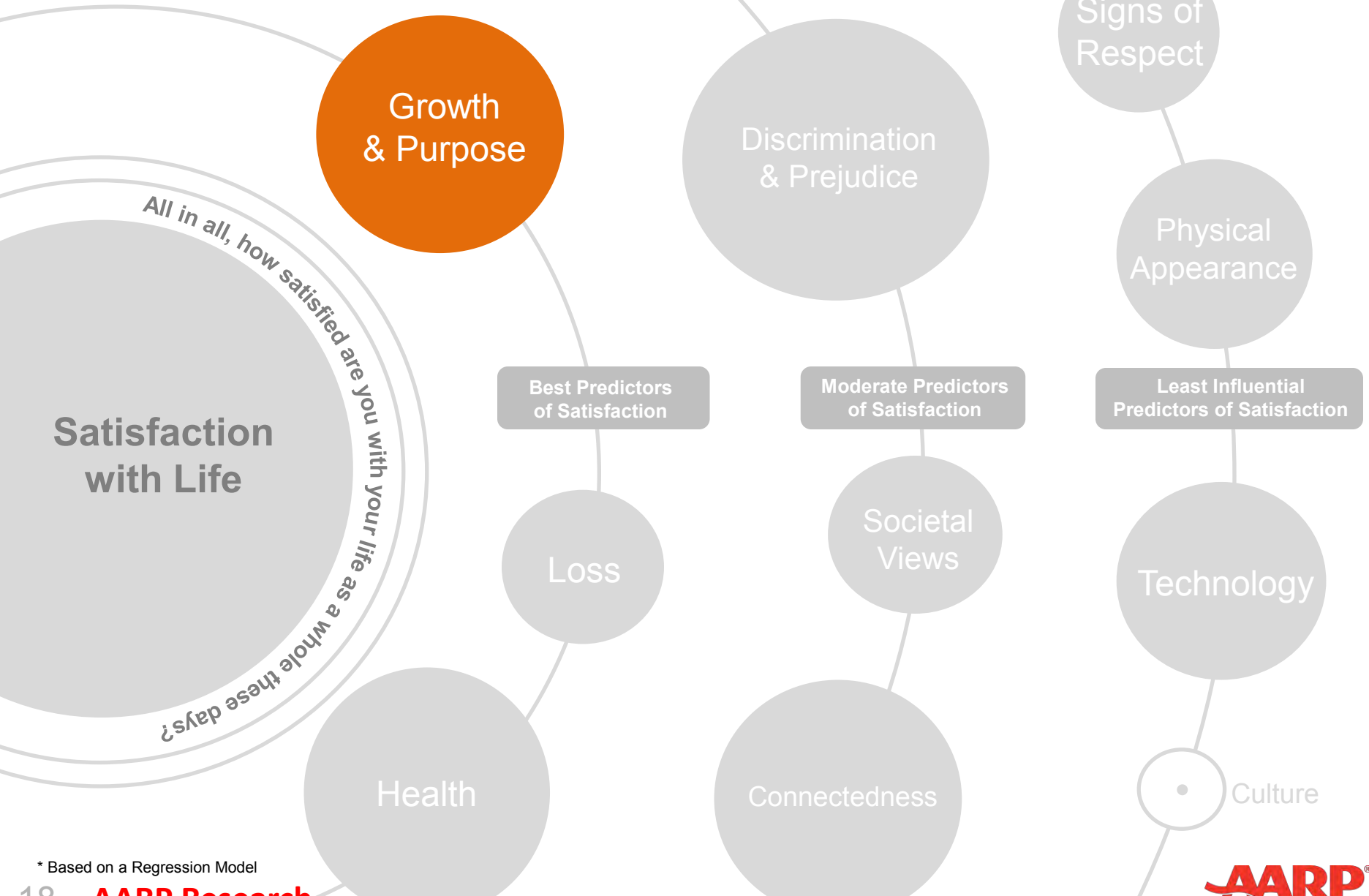
Connectedness

Culture

* Based on Regression Modeling

Drivers of Overall Satisfaction*

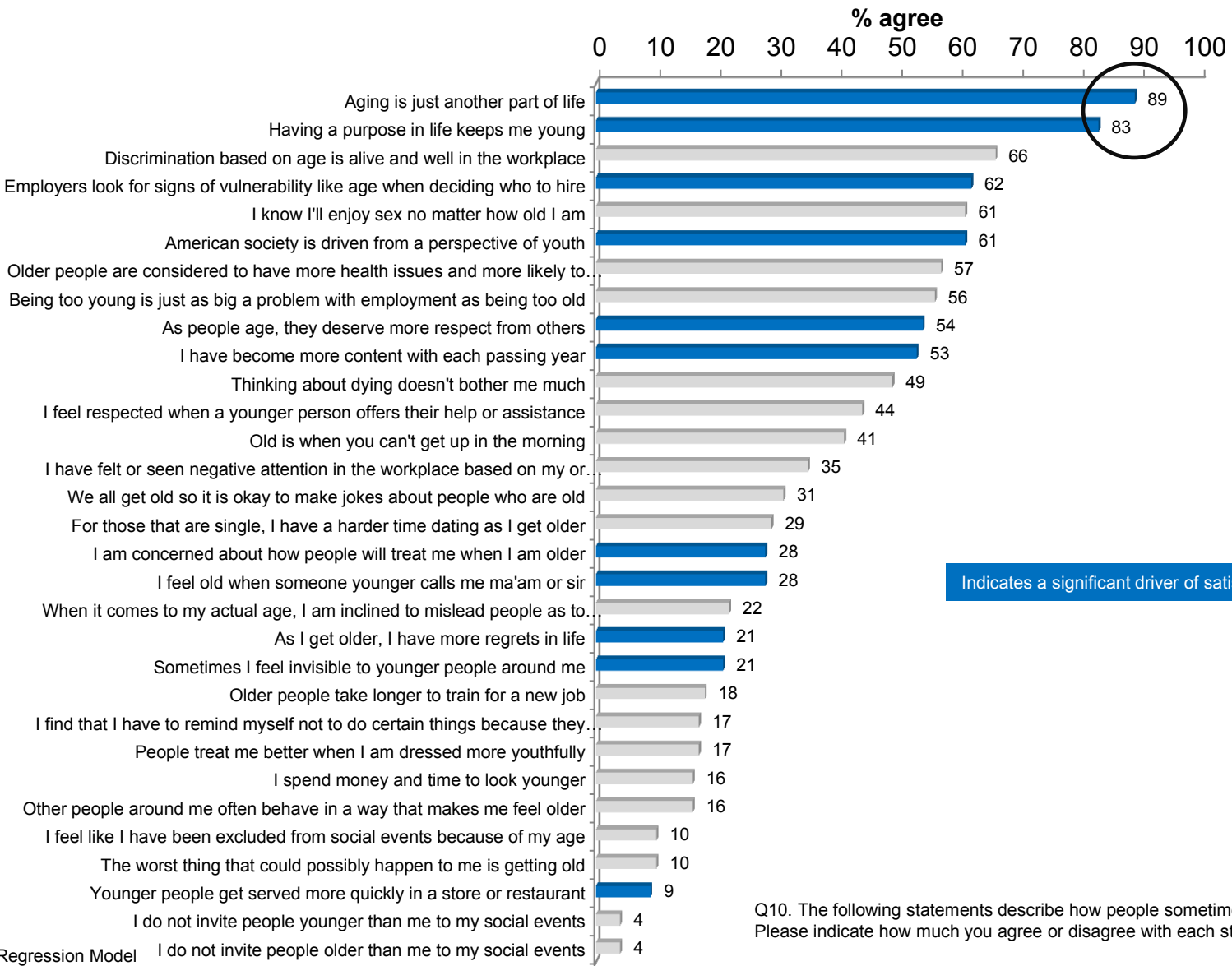
Different types of attitudes on aging drive older adults' overall satisfaction with life



* Based on a Regression Model

Over 80% of those age 40 and above feel that aging is just another part of life as well as having a purpose in life is what keeps people young

How people sometimes feel about aging



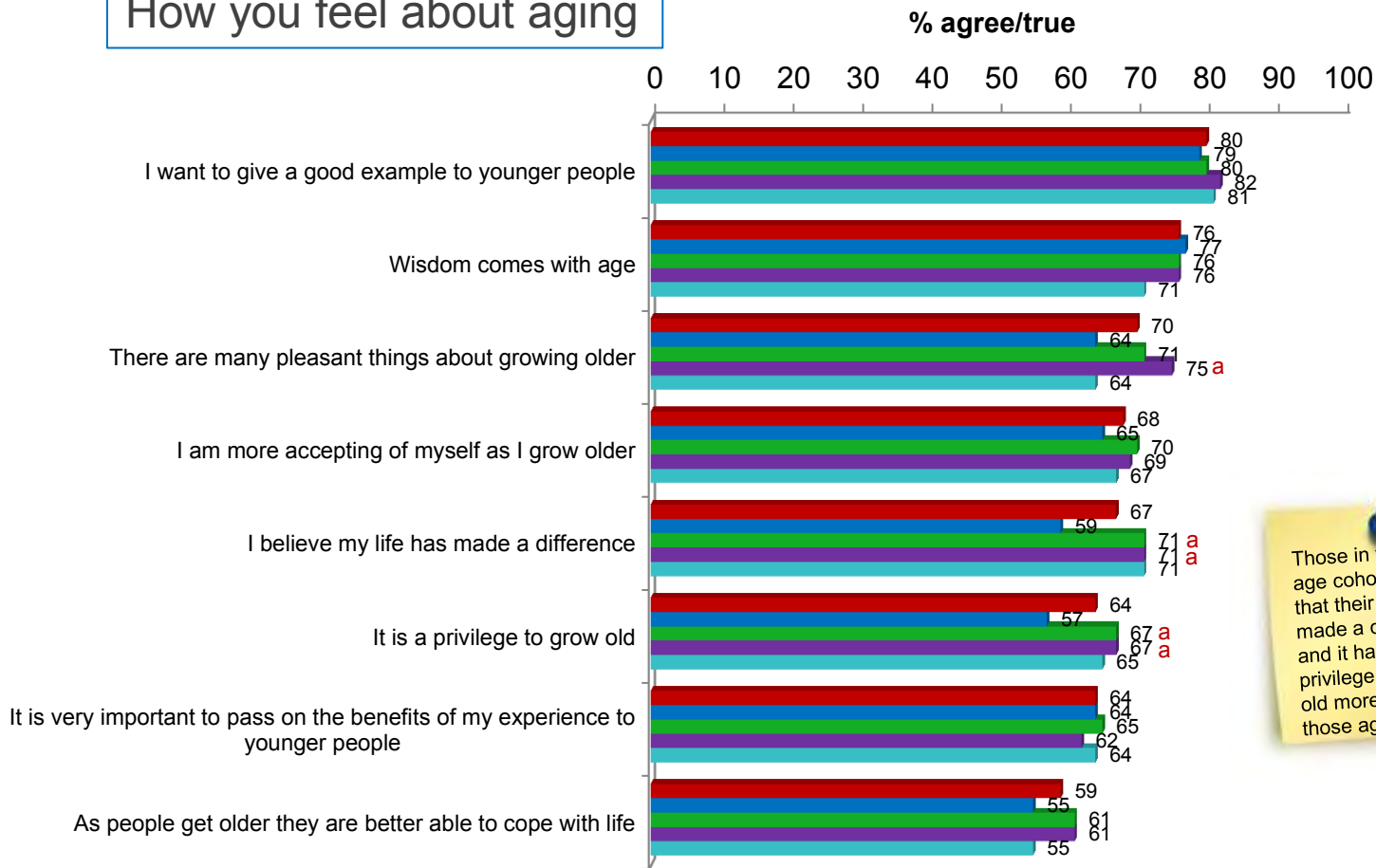
Indicates a significant driver of satisfaction with life*

Q10. The following statements describe how people sometimes feel about aging. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

* Based on a Regression Model

Most (59% or more on all attributes) feel that getting older is a positive experience. Specifically, they want to give a good example to younger people (80%) and feel wisdom comes with age (76%)

How you feel about aging



Those in the older age cohorts agree that their life has made a difference and it has been a privilege to grow old more so than those age 40-50.

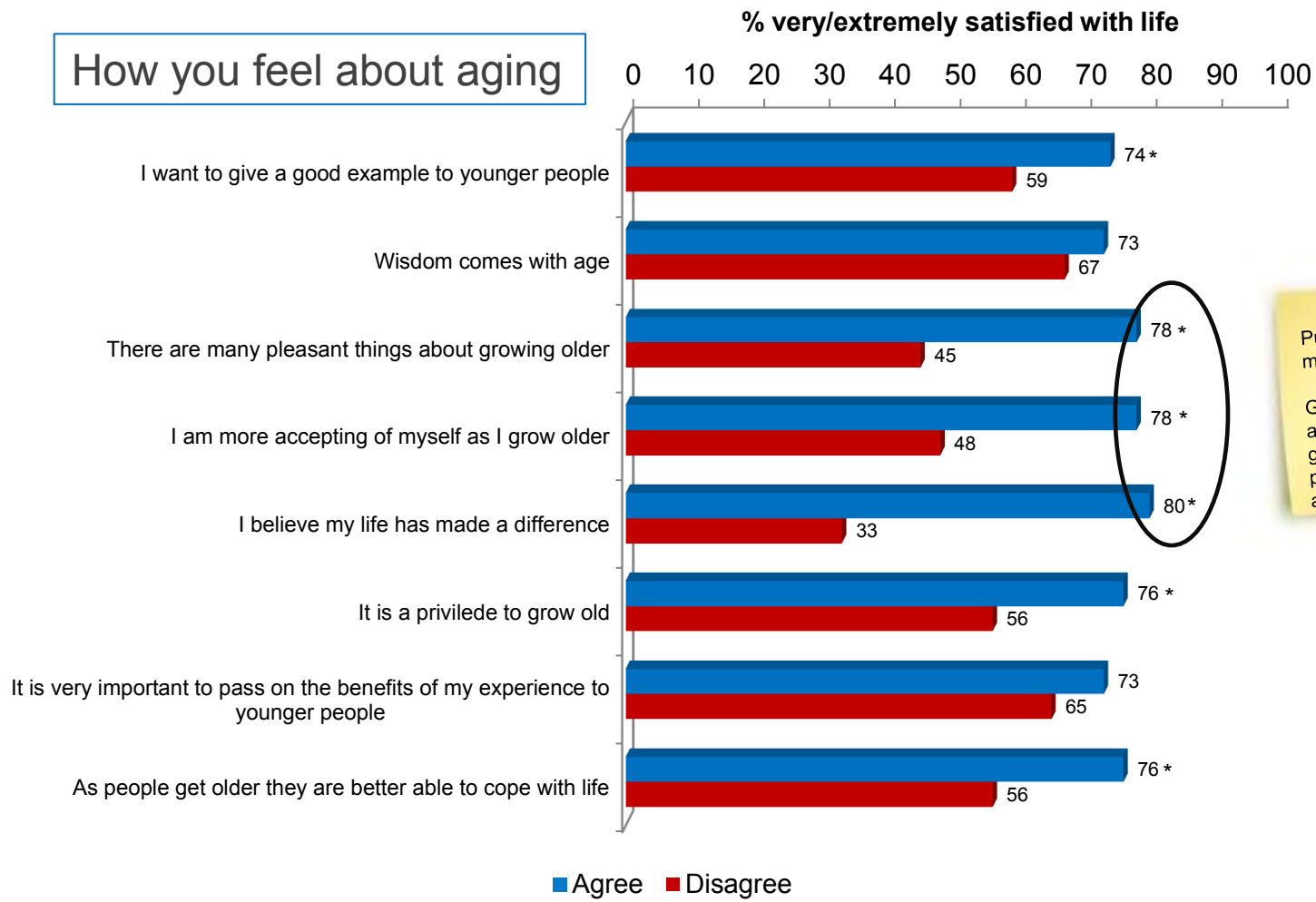
■ ALL (n=1808) ^a Age 40-50 (n=602) ^b Age 51-60 (n=605) ^c Age 61-69 (n=501) ^d Age 70+ (n=100)

a b c d - Significantly higher than the letter designation.

Q5. The following questions ask how you feel about aging. Please choose the answer that appears most appropriate. If you are unsure about which response to give to a question, the first response you think of is often the best one.

Those that agree with attitudes that relate to psychological growth are more likely to be very to extremely satisfied with life, especially those that believe their life has made a difference (80%)

How you feel about aging



Purpose: Life has made a difference

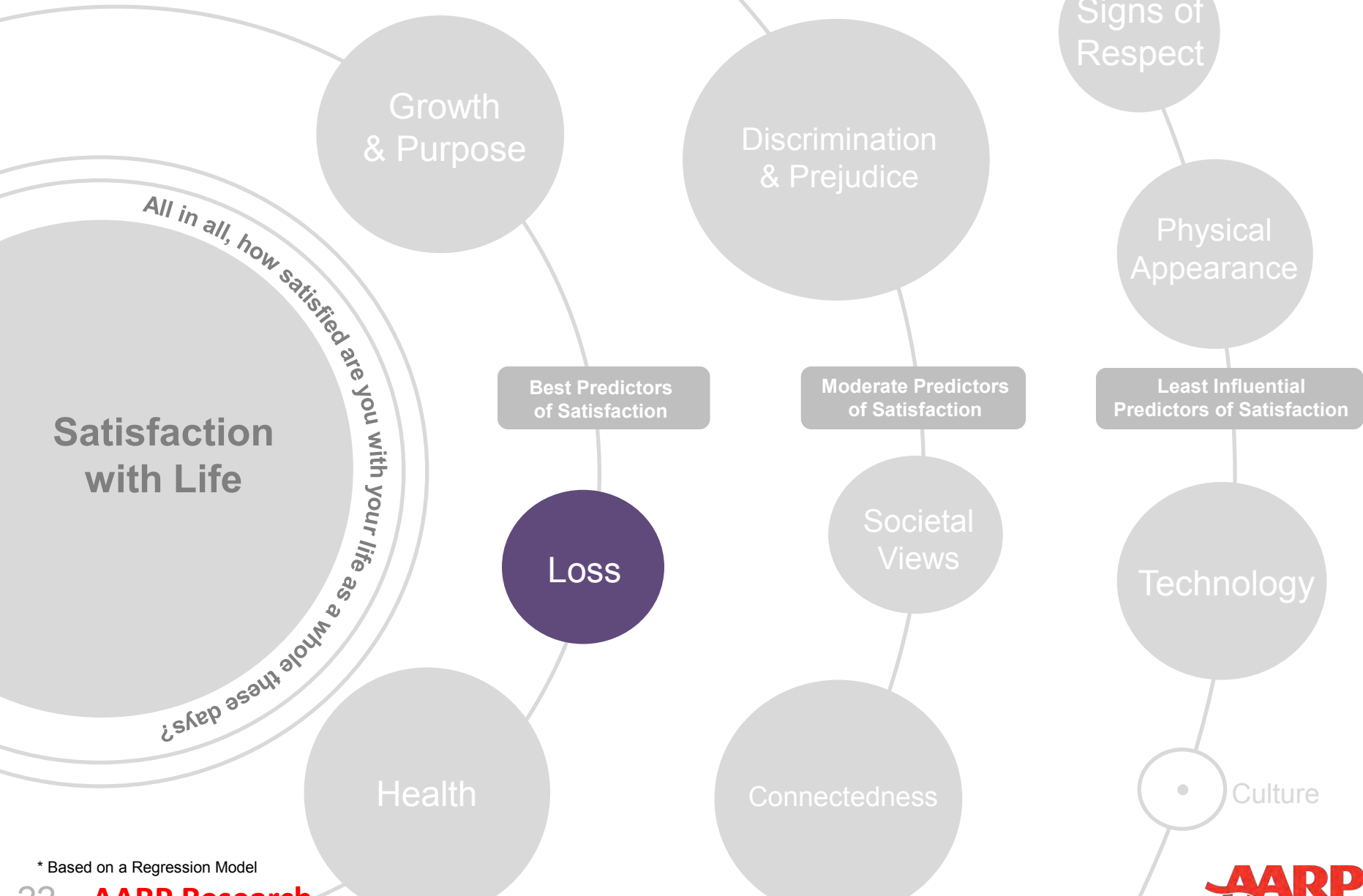
Growth: More accepting of self as grow older; many pleasant things about growing older

* Statistically significant difference

Q5. The following questions ask how you feel about aging. Please choose the answer that appears most appropriate. If you are unsure about which response to give to a question, the first response you think of is often the best one.

Drivers of Overall Satisfaction*

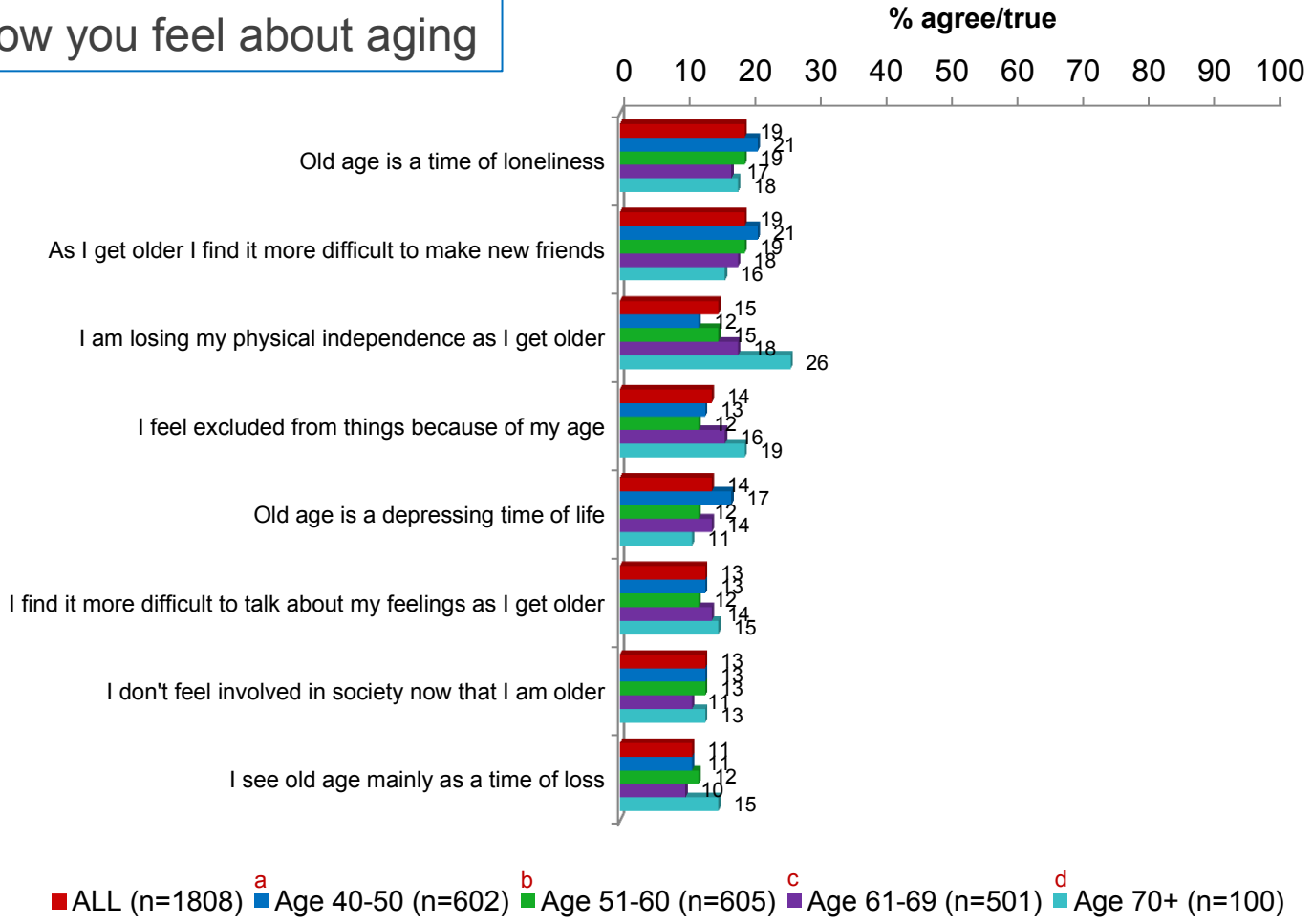
Different types of attitudes on aging drive older adults' overall satisfaction with life



* Based on a Regression Model

Only about one out of six adults age 40 and above agree with attitudes that relate to psychological loss

How you feel about aging

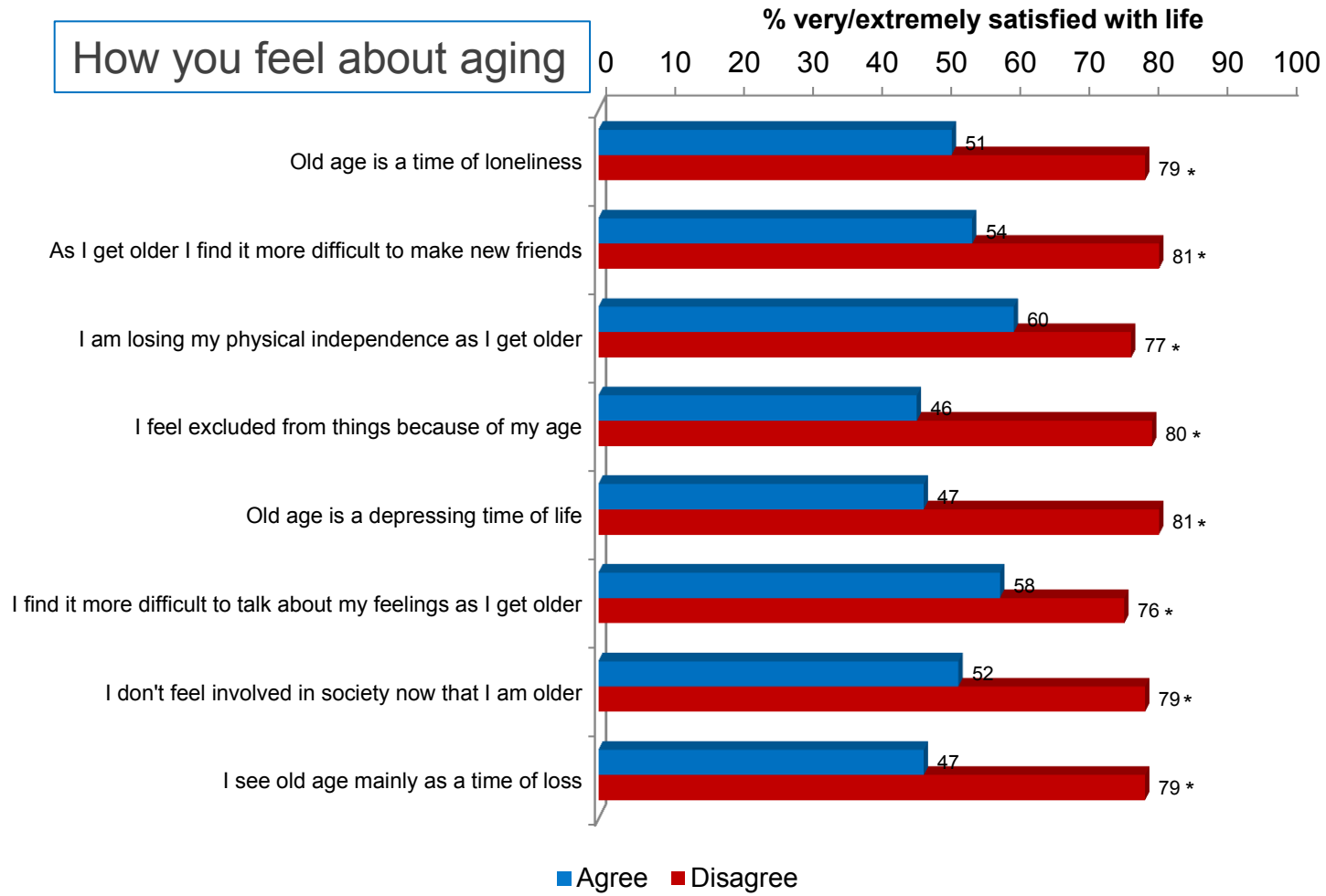


a b c d - Significantly higher than the letter designation.

Q5. The following questions ask how you feel about aging. Please choose the answer that appears most appropriate. If you are unsure about which response to give to a question, the first response you think of is often the best one.

However, psychological loss has a profound effect on satisfaction with life for those that are experiencing it. Those that feel psychological loss are least likely to be satisfied with life

How you feel about aging



* Statistically significant difference

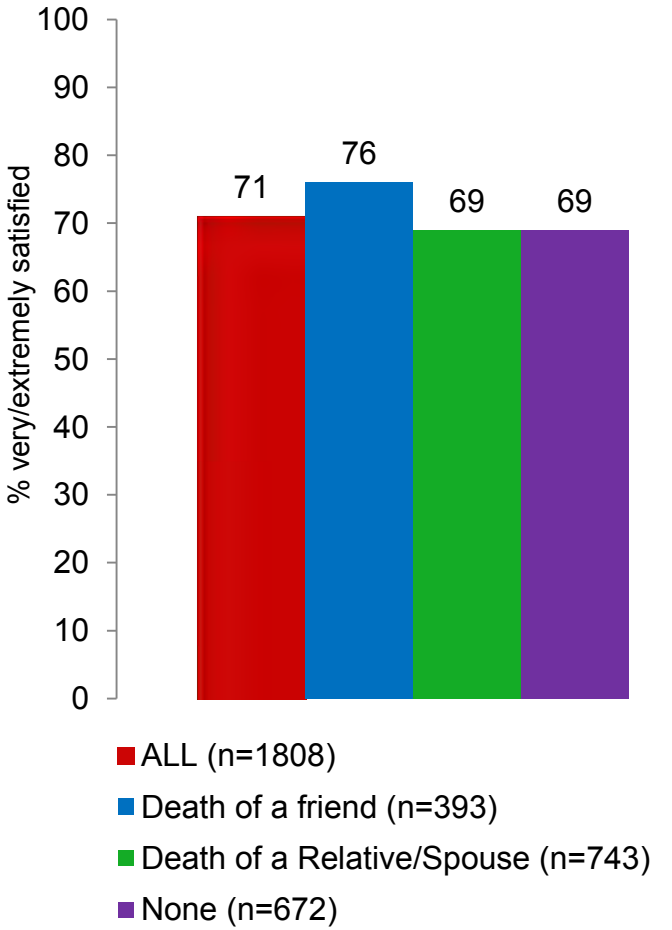
Q5. The following questions ask how you feel about aging. Please choose the answer that appears most appropriate. If you are unsure about which response to give to a question, the first response you think of is often the best one.

The loss of a good friend does not impact satisfaction with life (76%) as much as a loss of a close relative/spouse or no death events (69%)

Death of a...

- 22% – Good Friend
- 33% – Close Relative
- 3% - Spouse/Partner
- 37% - None

Overall Satisfaction with Life

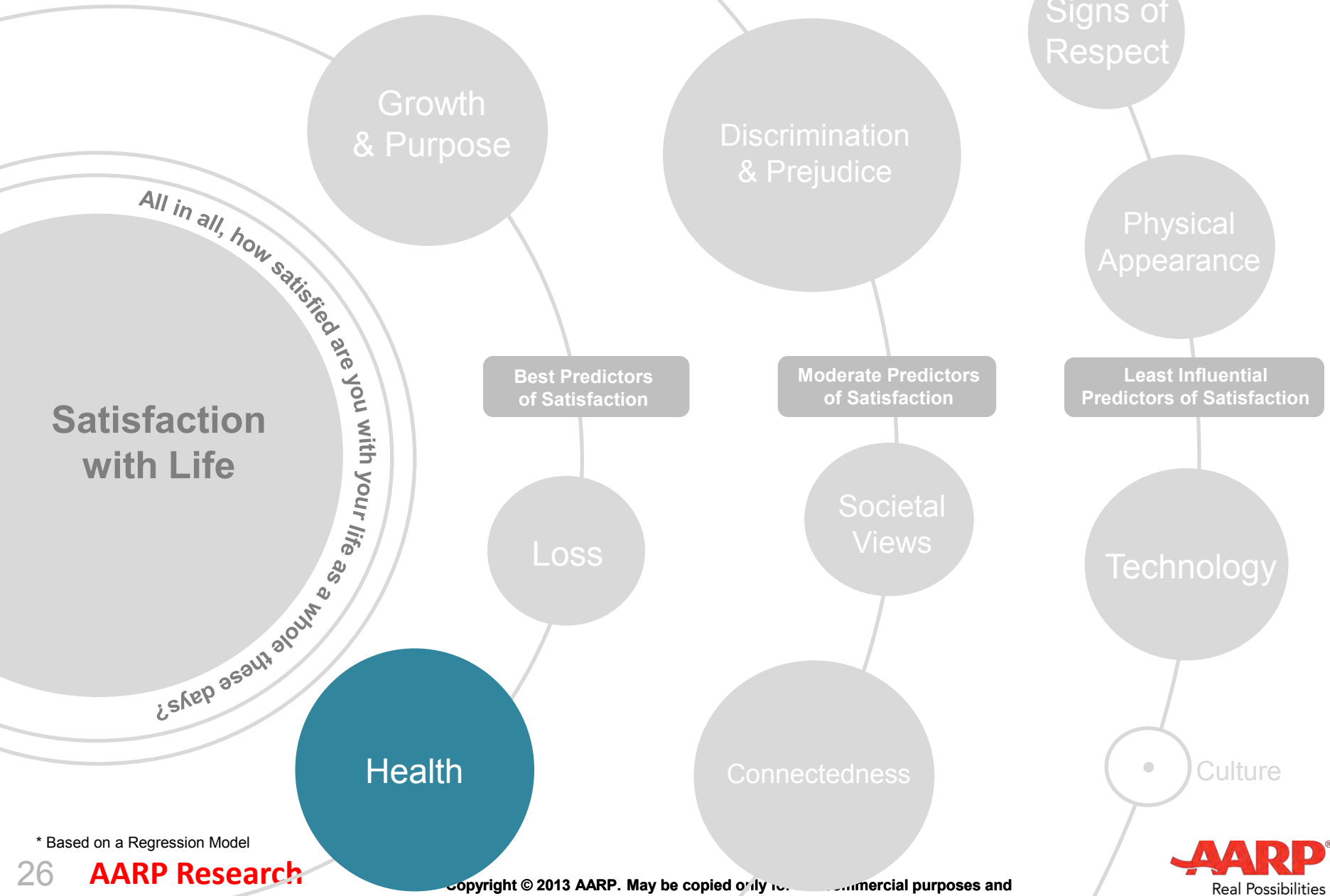


- Those that have lost a friend are more likely to feel that:**
- Growing older has been easier than thought
 - Have become more content with each passing year
 - Health is better than expected at current age
 - Will enjoy sex no matter how old they are
 - Respected when a younger person offers their help or assistance
 - Discrimination based on age is alive and well in the workplace
 - Have felt or seen negative attention in the workplace based on their or another's age
 - Have bigger support networks

* Statistically significant difference

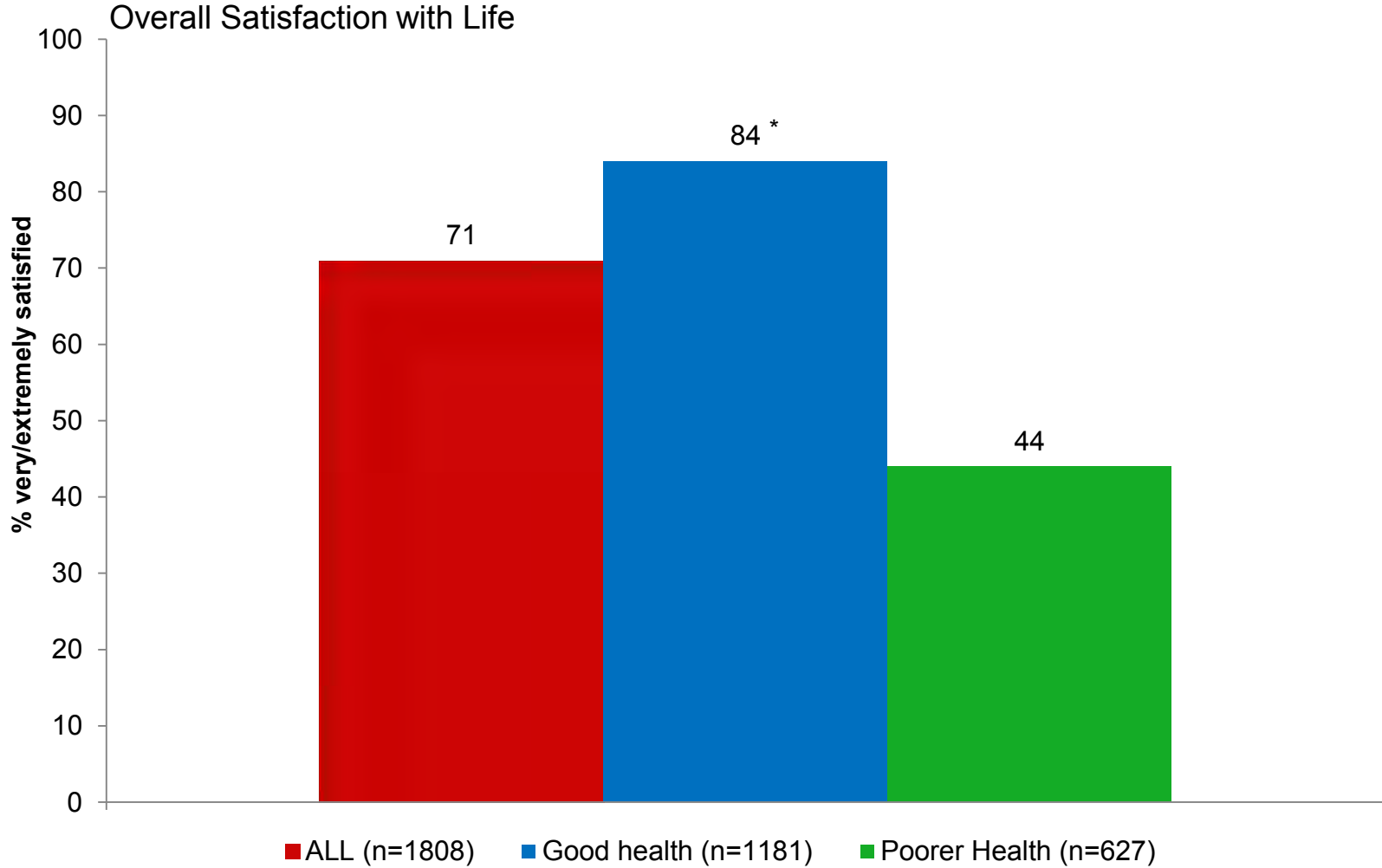
Drivers of Overall Satisfaction*

Different types of attitudes on aging drive older adults' overall satisfaction with life



* Based on a Regression Model

Overall health is the biggest driver of satisfaction with life**. Those who rate their health good are almost twice as satisfied with life (84%) compared to those who rate their health poorer (44%)

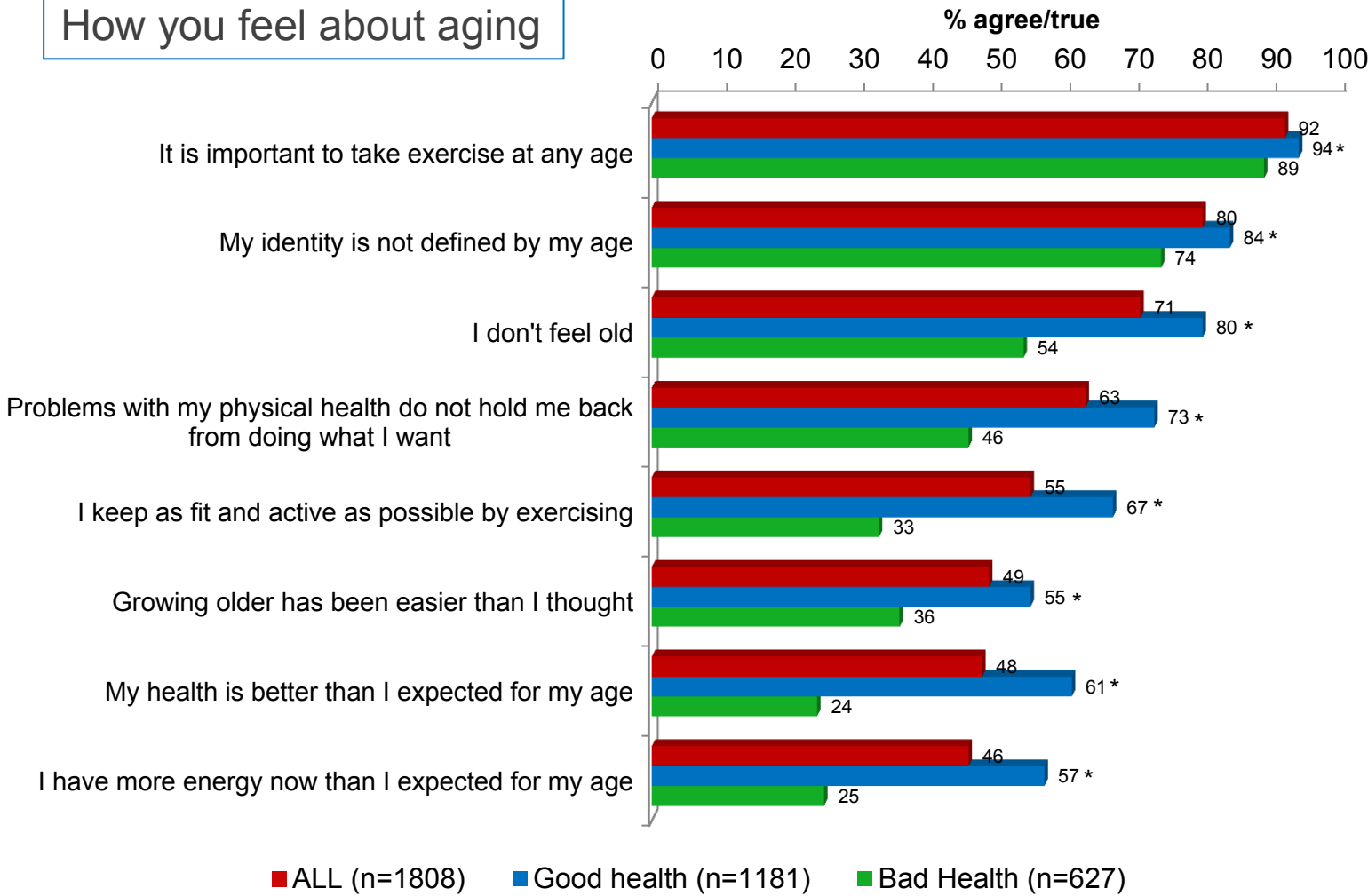


* Statistically significant difference between groups
* *Based on a Regression Model

Q21. All in all, how satisfied are you with your life as a whole these days? Are you...
Q27. Taken all together, how would you say things are these days? Would you say they are...

Those in good health have more positive attitudes that relate to physical change compared to those in poorer health

How you feel about aging

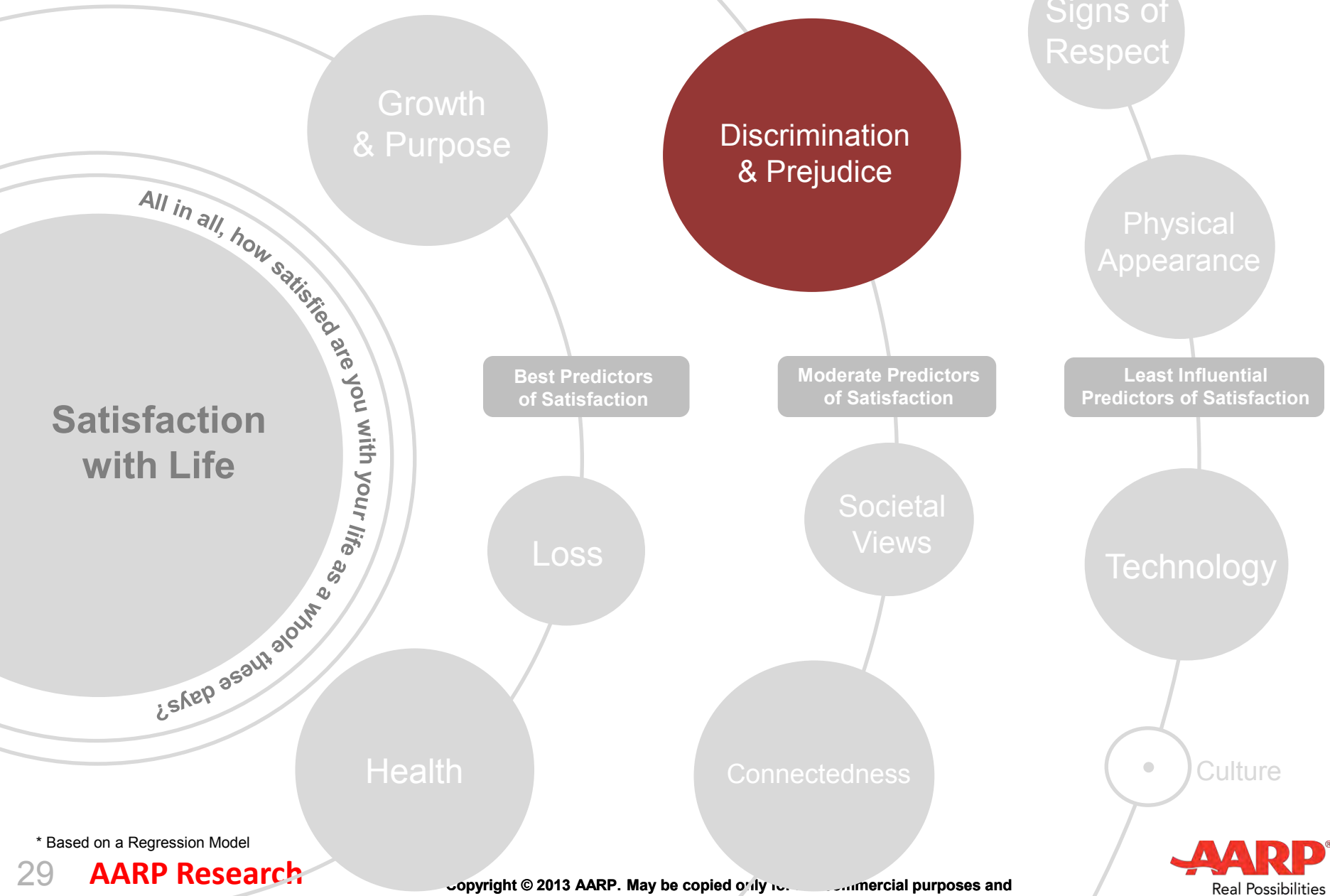


* Statistically significant difference

Q5. The following questions ask how you feel about aging. Please choose the answer that appears most appropriate. If you are unsure about which response to give to a question, the first response you think of is often the best one.

Drivers of Overall Satisfaction*

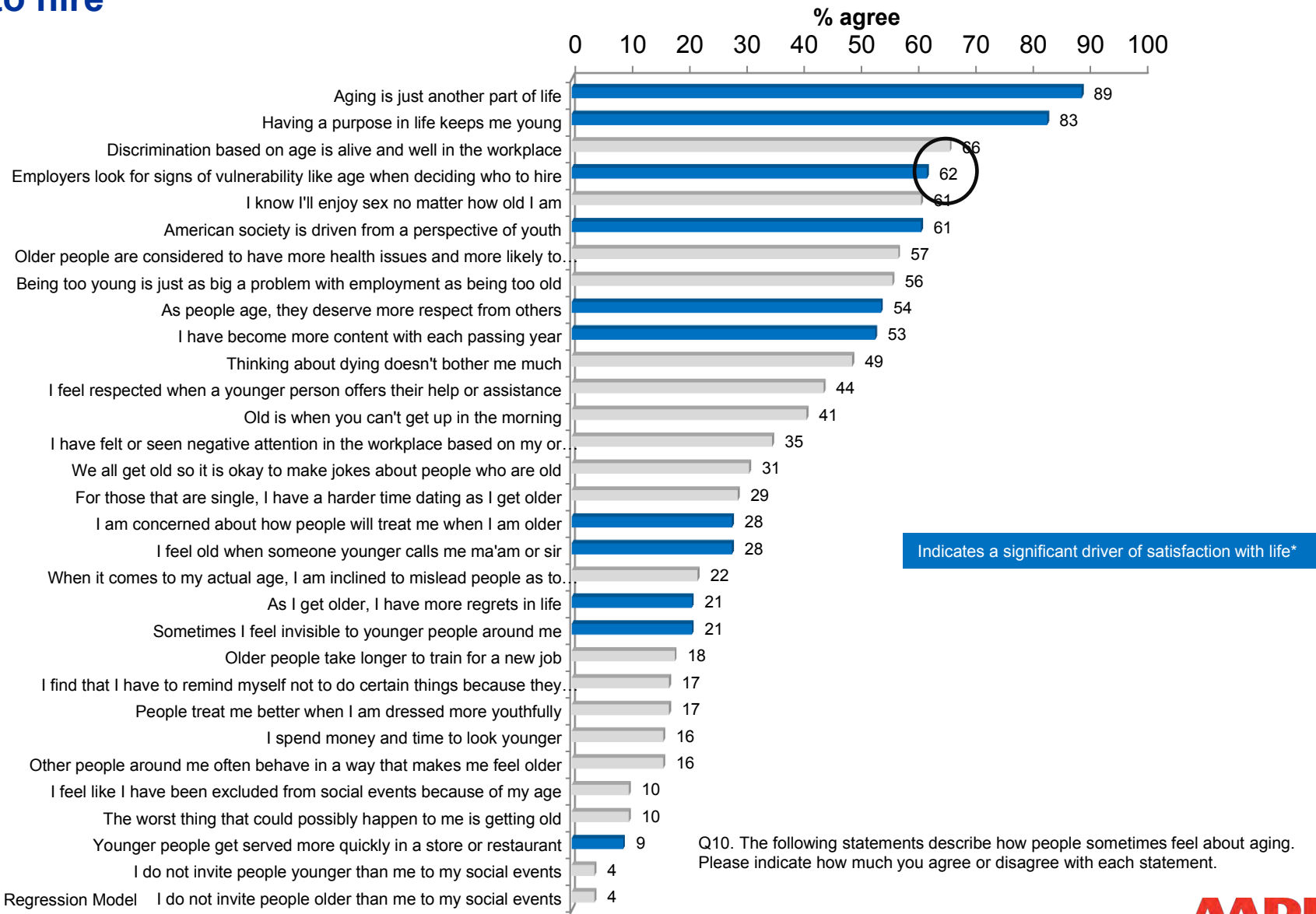
Different types of attitudes on aging drive older adults' overall satisfaction with life



* Based on a Regression Model

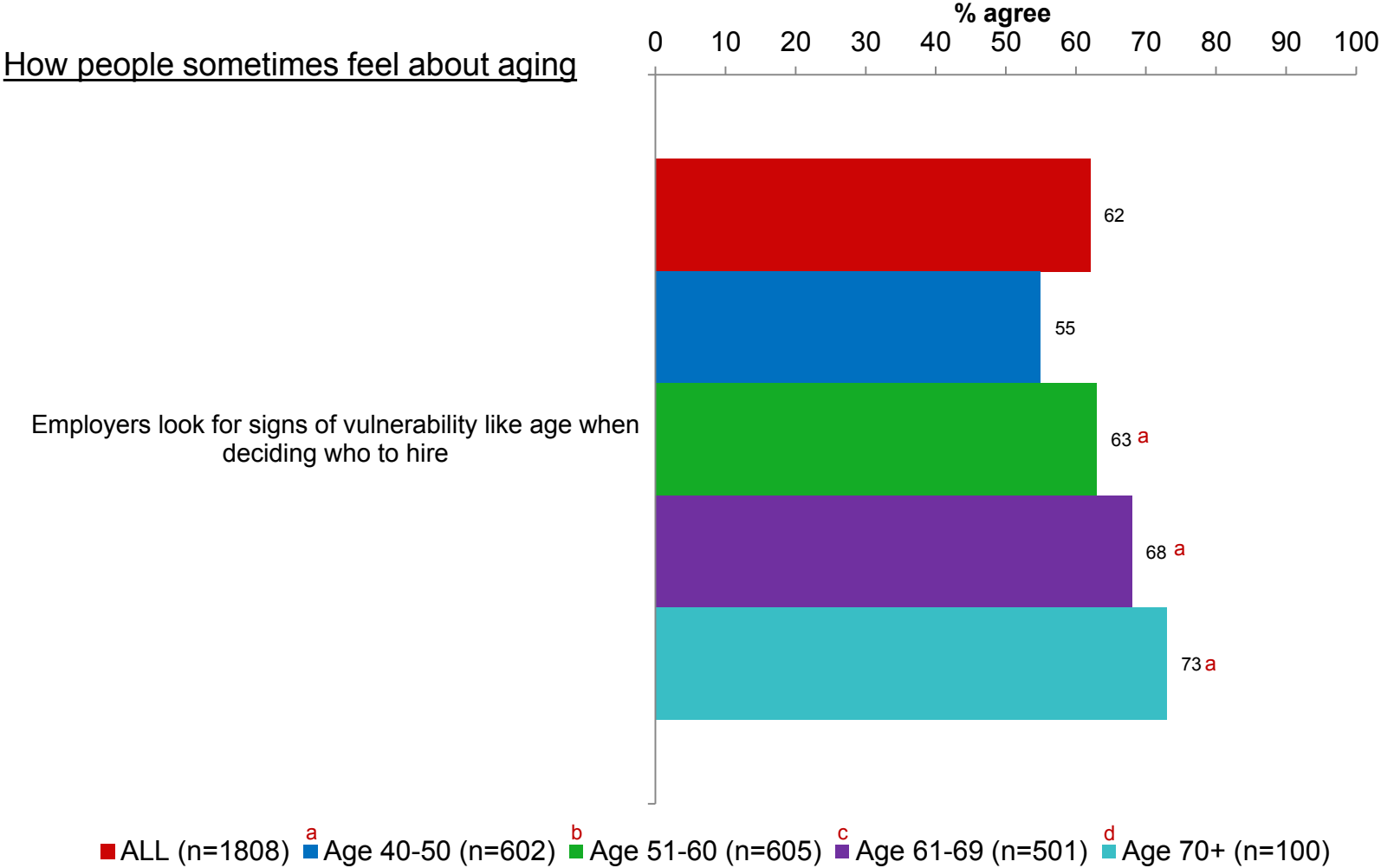
Workplace discrimination/prejudices drive overall satisfaction with life. Specifically, 'employers looking for signs of vulnerability like age when deciding who to hire'

How people sometimes feel about aging



* Based on a Regression Model I do not invite people older than me to my social events

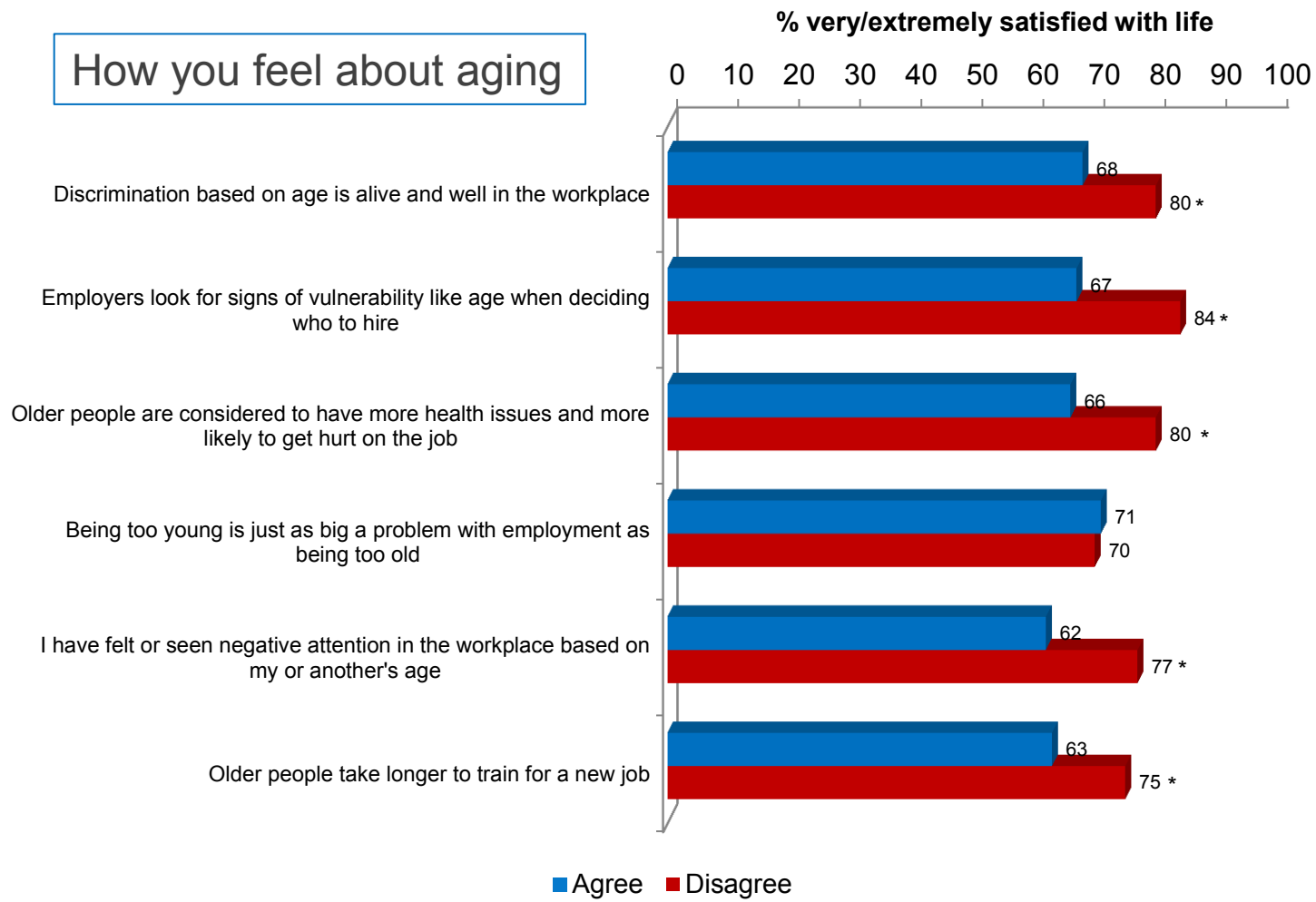
Feelings about employers looking for signs of vulnerability like age when deciding who to hire increases with age



a b c d - Significantly higher than the letter designation. Q10. The following statements describe how people sometimes feel about aging. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

Those that feel there is more discrimination in the workplace are not as satisfied with life

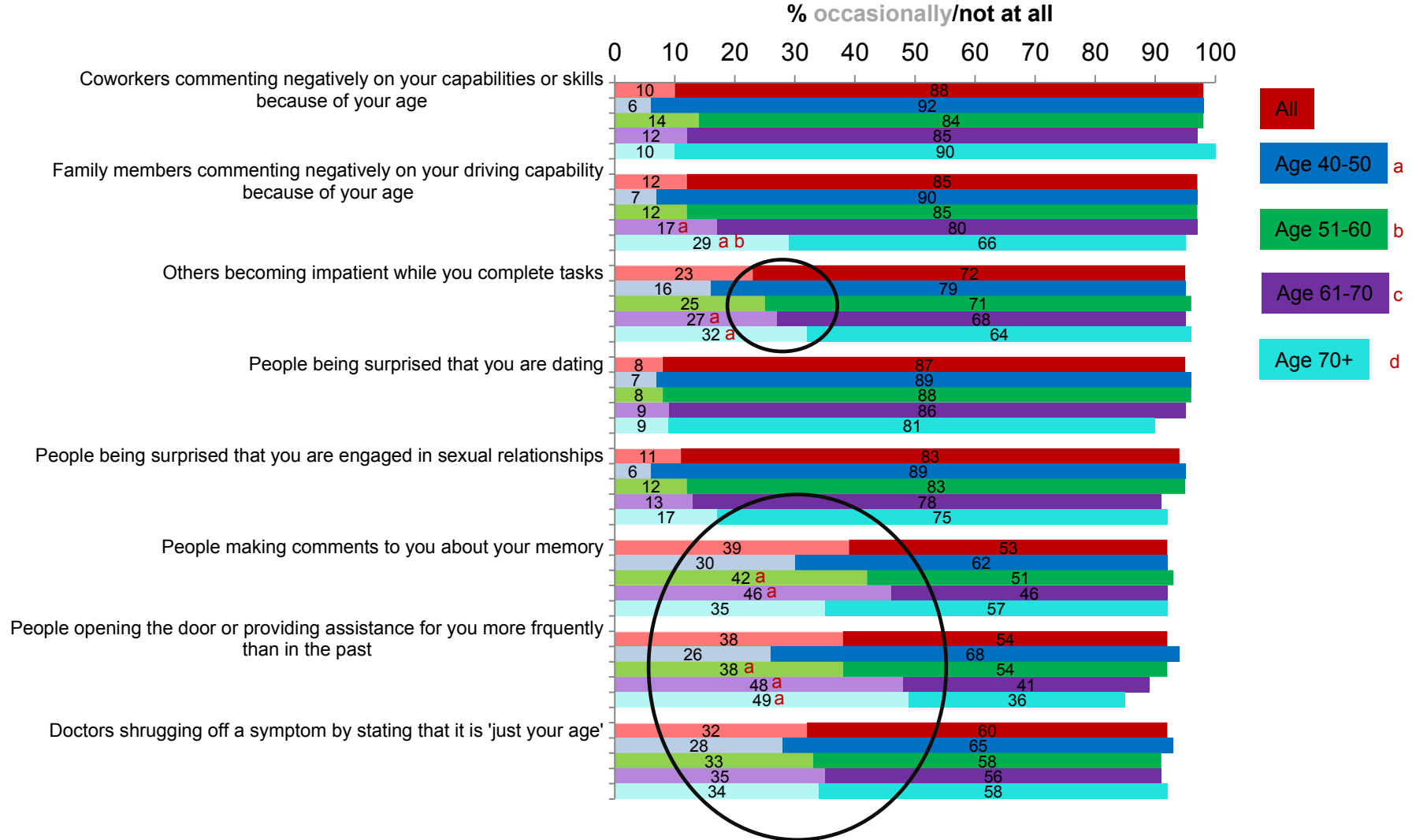
How you feel about aging



* Statistically significant difference

Q5. The following questions ask how you feel about aging. Please choose the answer that appears most appropriate. If you are unsure about which response to give to a question, the first response you think of is often the best one.

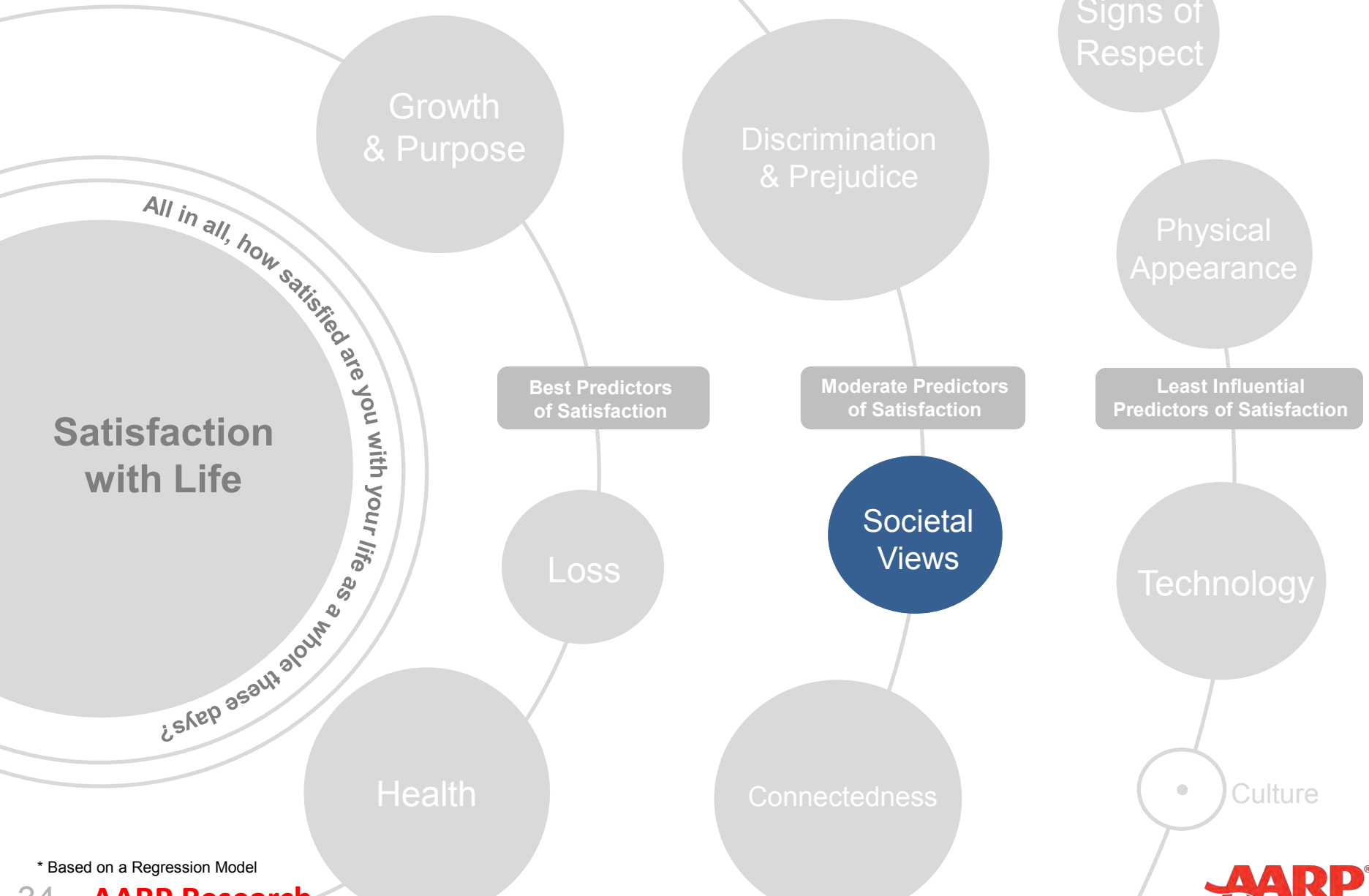
In addition to discrimination in the workplace, other forms of age discrimination exist. Specifically, comments about memory, unasked for assistance, doctors shrugging off symptoms, & others becoming impatient while you complete a task.



a b c d - Significantly higher than the letter designation. Q14. How often have you encountered the following situations in your everyday life?

Drivers of Overall Satisfaction*

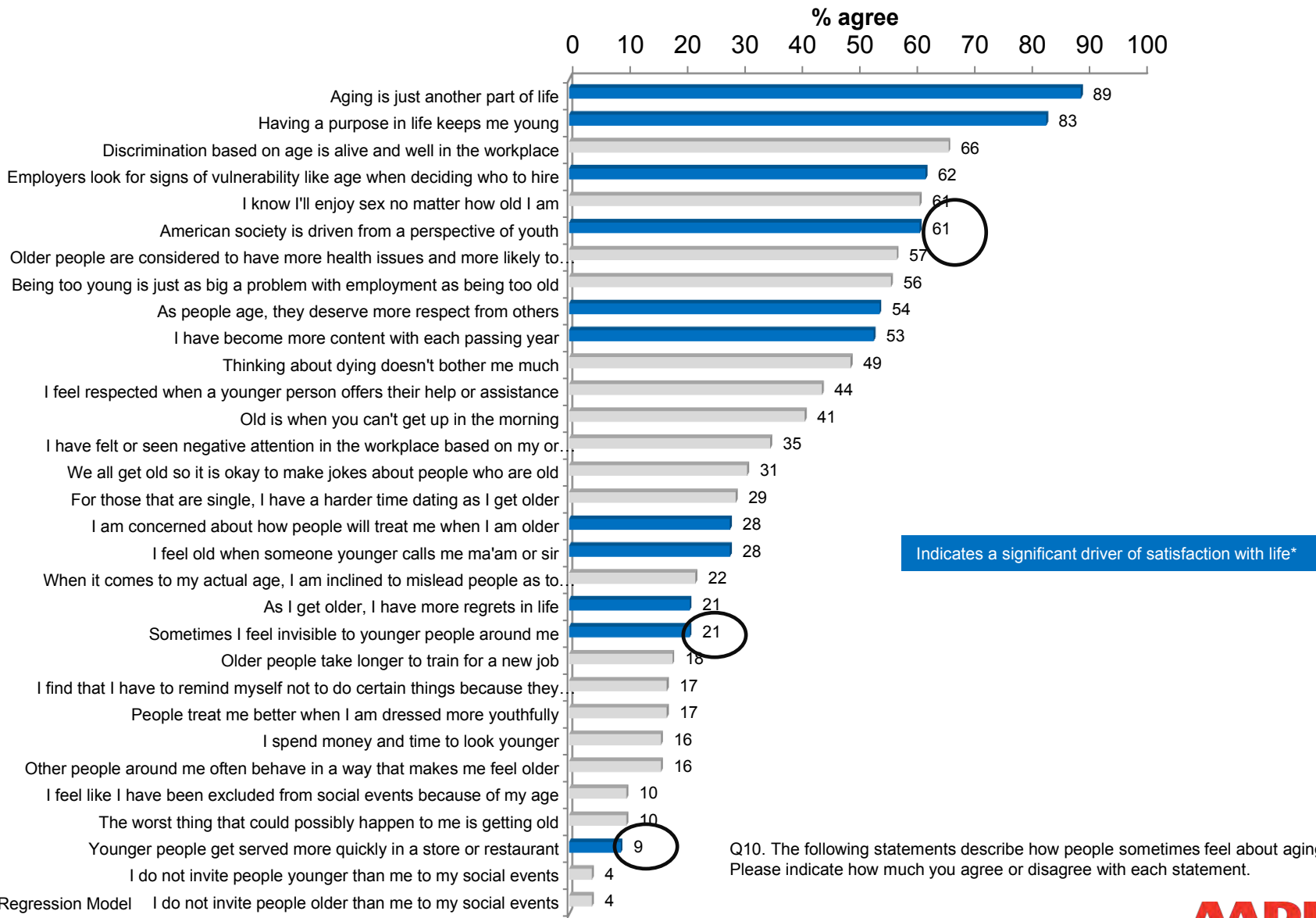
Different types of attitudes on aging drive older adults' overall satisfaction with life



* Based on a Regression Model

American society being driven from a perspective of youth and the treatment from and to younger people are drivers of satisfaction with life

How people sometimes feel about aging

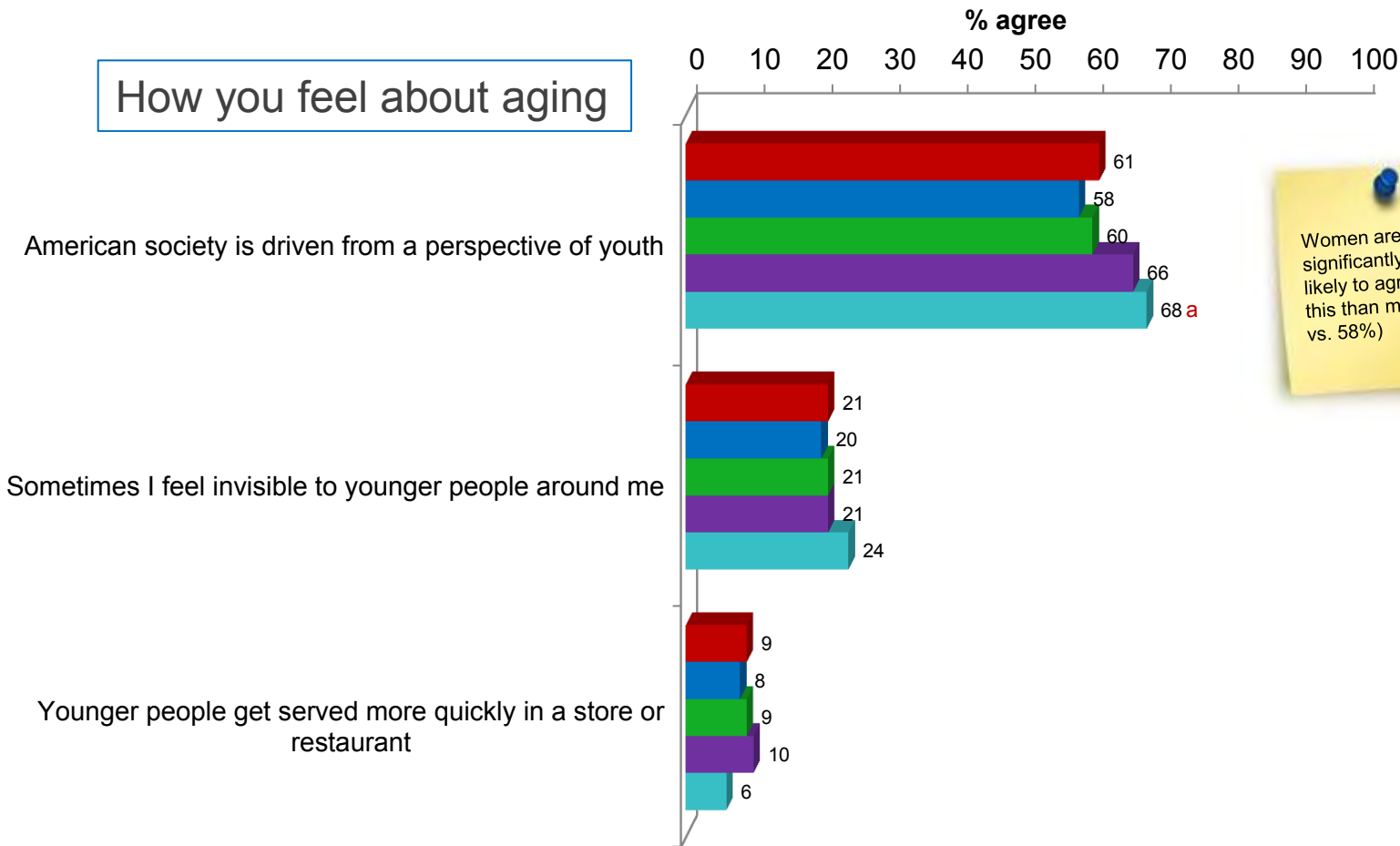


Q10. The following statements describe how people sometimes feel about aging. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

* Based on a Regression Model I do not invite people older than me to my social events

Feelings that American society is driven from a perspective of youth increases with age

How you feel about aging



Women are significantly more likely to agree with this than men (64% vs. 58%)

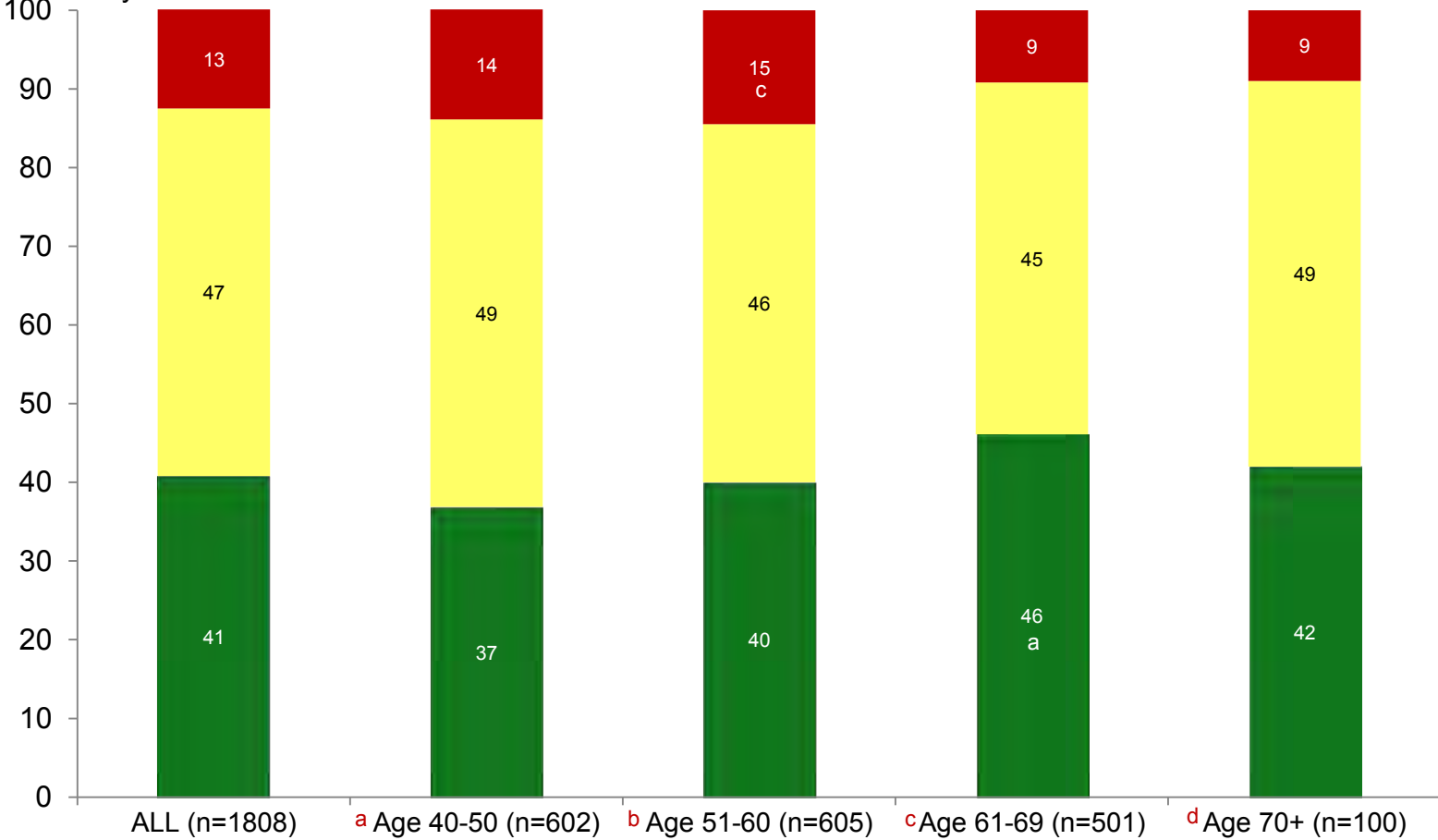
■ ALL (n=1808) ■^a Age 40-50 (n=602) ■^b Age 51-60 (n=605) ■^c Age 61-69 (n=501) ■^d Age 70+ (n=100)

* Statistically significant difference by ...

Q10. The following statements describe how people sometimes feel about aging. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

While feelings persist that American society is driven from a perspective of youth, over 40% feel that things are better as they grow older

Overall, as you grow older, do you find that things are better, worse or about the same as you thought they would be?



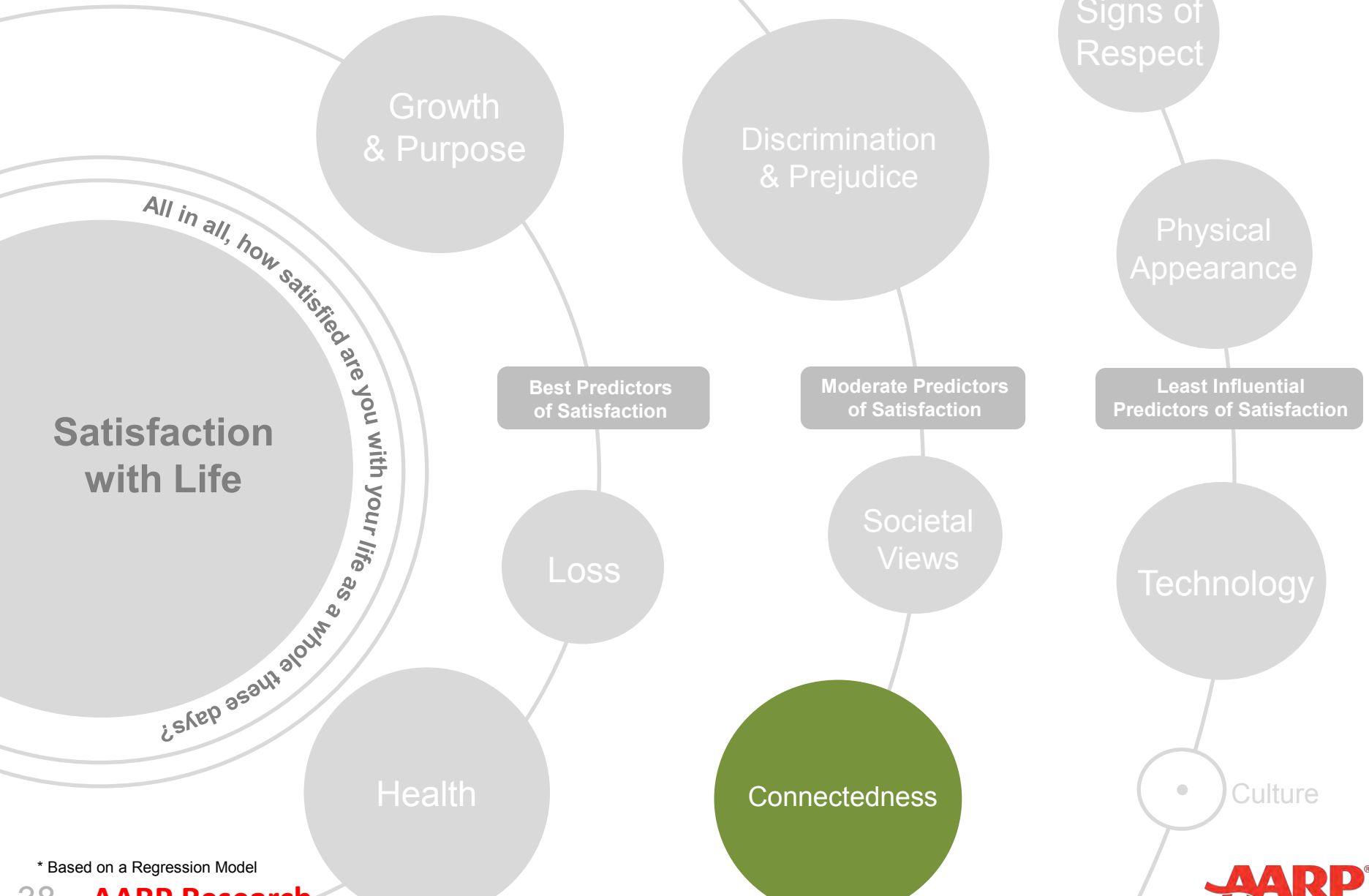
■ Better ■ About the same ■ Worse

^{a b c d} - Significantly higher than the letter designation.

Q11. Overall, as you grow older, do you find that things are better, worse or about the same as you thought they would be?

Drivers of Overall Satisfaction*

Different types of attitudes on aging drive older adults' overall satisfaction with life



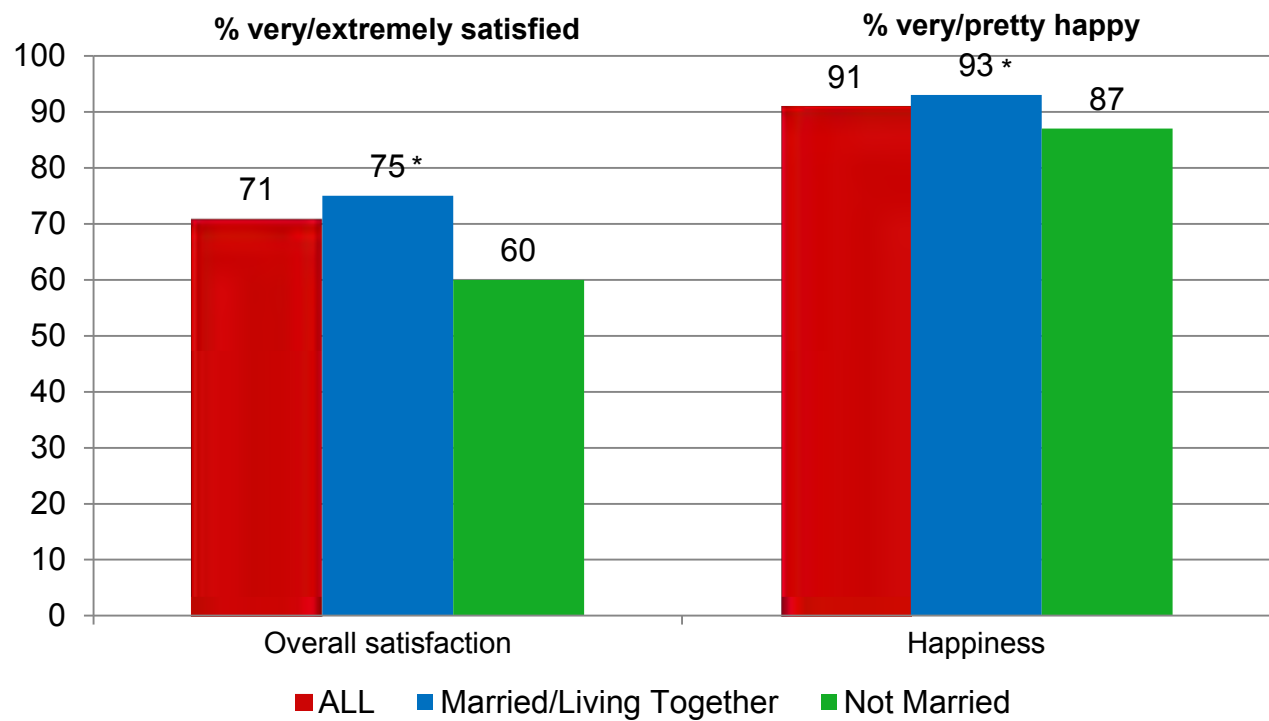
* Based on a Regression Model

Marriage is a key driver of satisfaction with life**. Those married or living with a partner are significantly more satisfied (75%) than those who are single (60%)



Married people are more likely to find that things in life are better as they grow older (48% vs. 27%)

Married people are in better health than single people (68% vs. 50%)



** Based on a Regression Model
 * Statistically significant difference between groups

Q22. How many people do you have in your life that have been very supportive of you during the past year?
 Q23. How many people do you have in your life whom you most often discuss matters fo personal importance with?

Having a 'personal network' is a key driver of satisfaction with life*. While 'support networks' may grow as people get older, 'personal networks' remain constant.

Number of people in life who have been supportive/personal confidantes



Those in poorer health have smaller support networks (5 vs. 8)

Personal Network: group of people whom you often discuss matters of personal importance with.

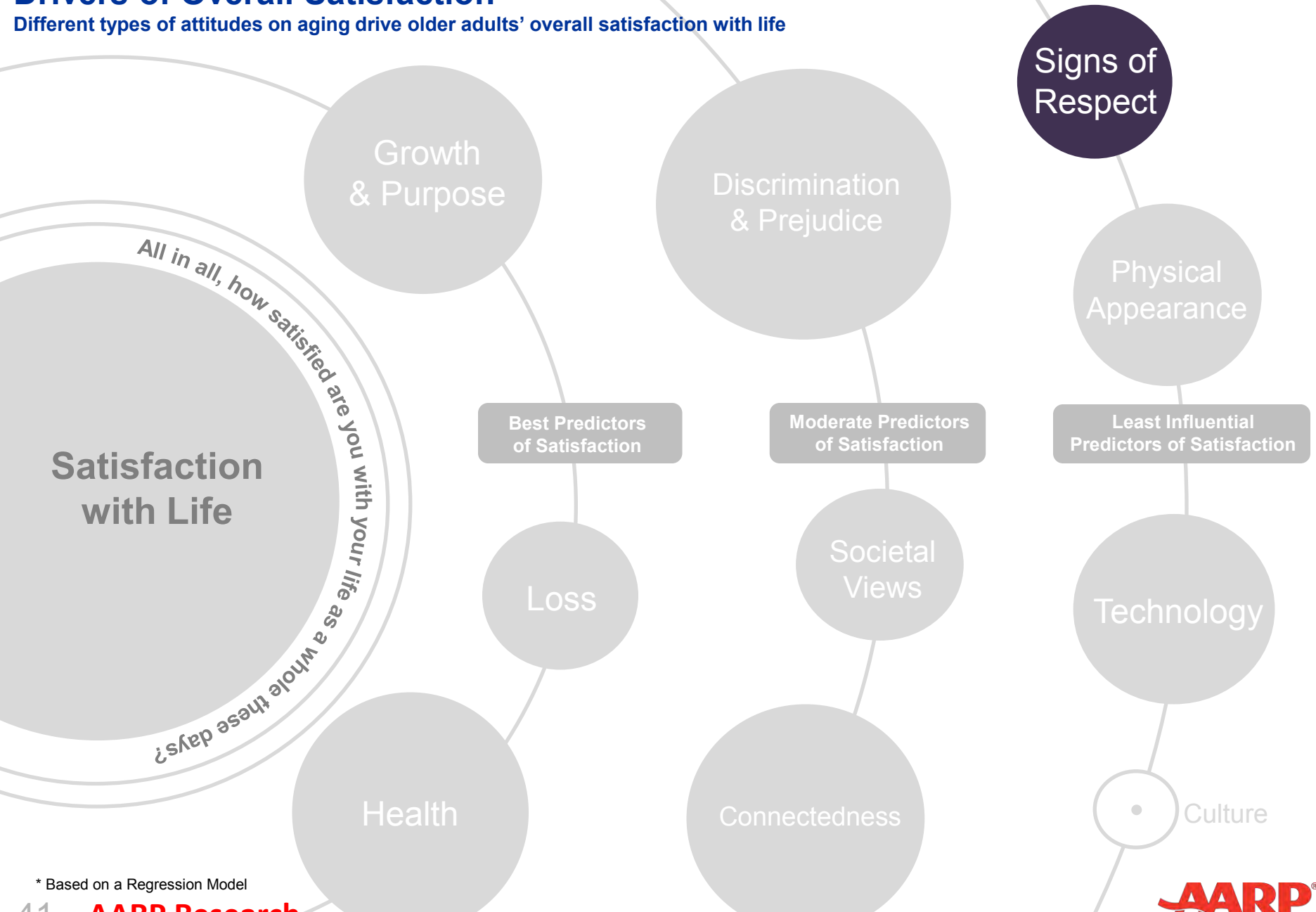
Support Network: people in your life who have been supportive of you in the past year.

* Based on a Regression Model
AARP Research

Q22. How many people do you have in your life that have been very supportive of you during the past year?
Q23. How many people do you have in your life whom you most often discuss matters fo personal importance with?

Drivers of Overall Satisfaction*

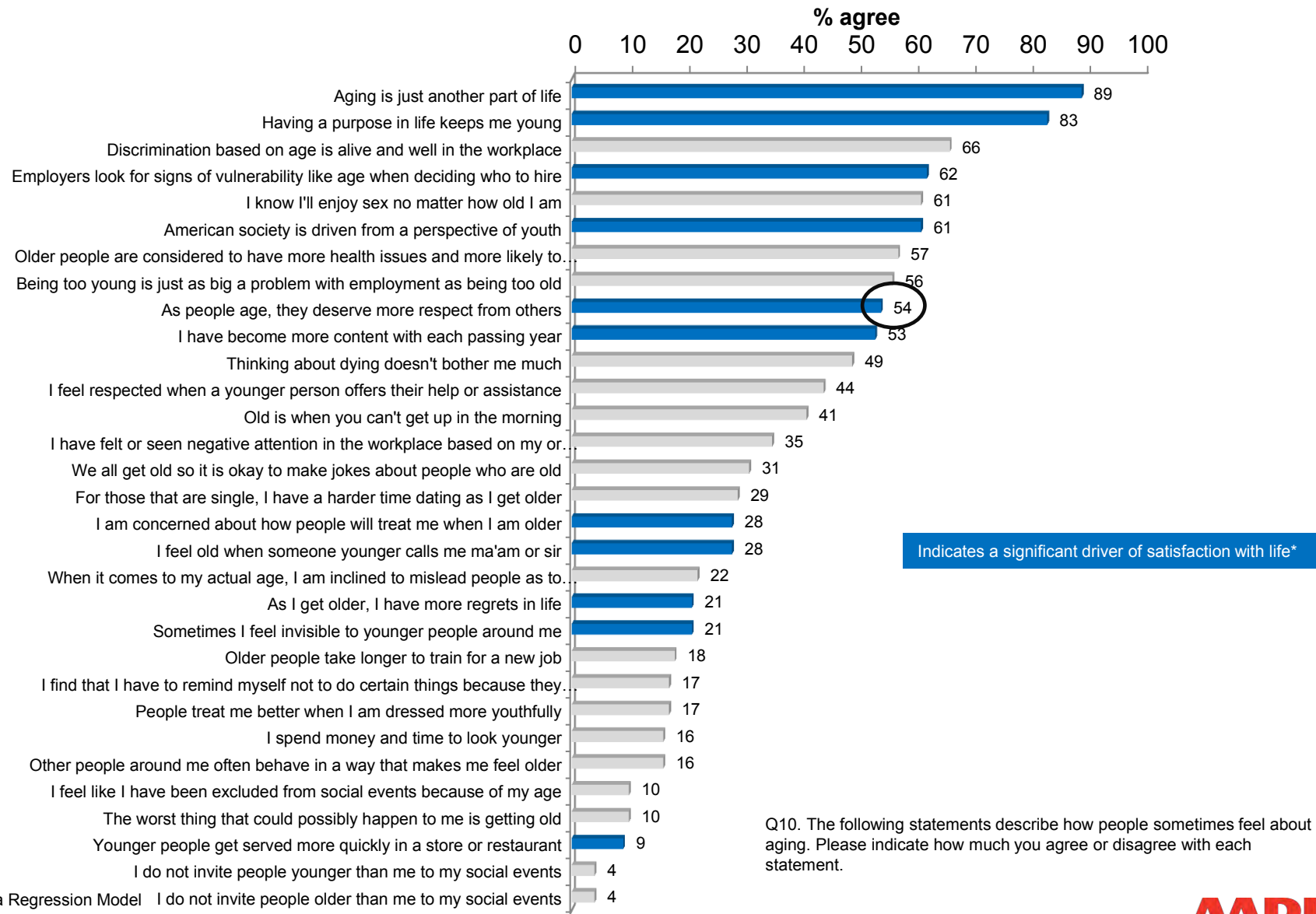
Different types of attitudes on aging drive older adults' overall satisfaction with life



* Based on a Regression Model

Receiving respect drives satisfaction with life. As people age they deserve more respect from others is a key driver of satisfaction with life.

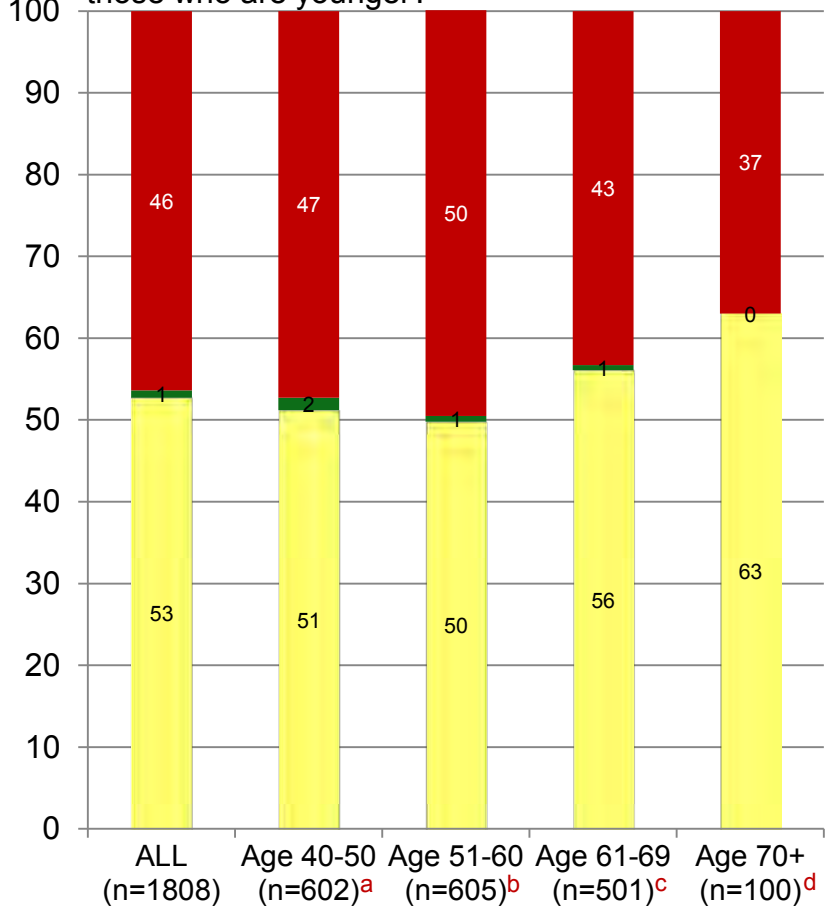
How people sometimes feel about aging



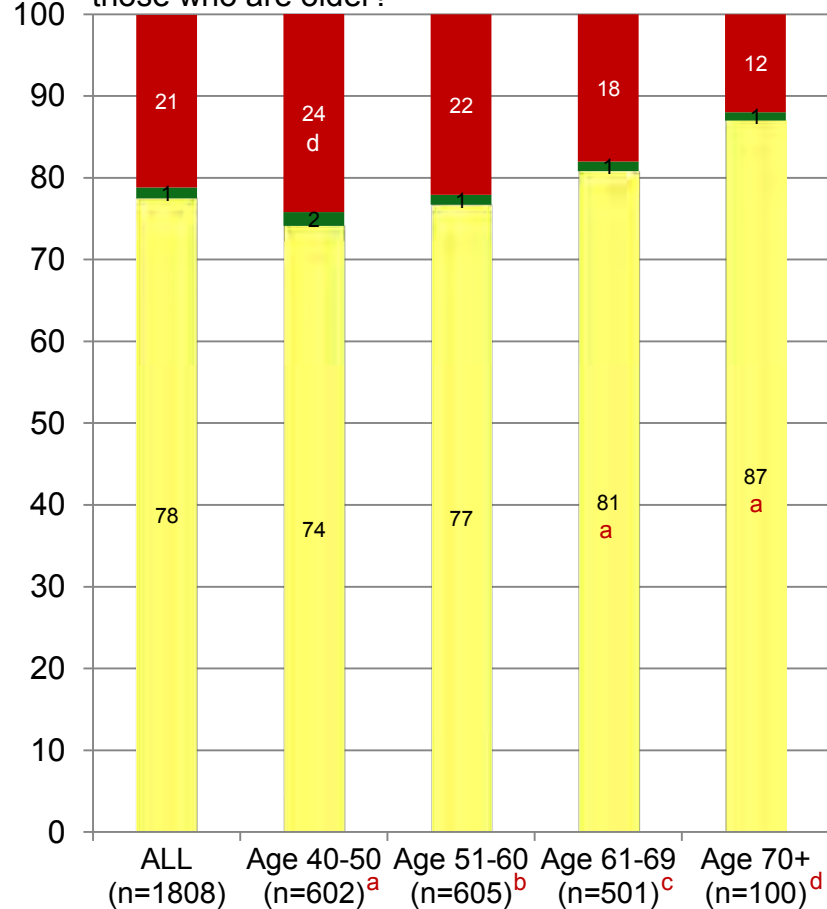
* Based on a Regression Model I do not invite people older than me to my social events

And, almost half of those 40 and older (46%) feel that they get too little respect from those younger than them

Do you feel that people your age get too much, too little, or about the right amount of respect from those who are younger?



Do you feel that people your age get too much, too little, or about the right amount of respect from those who are older?



■ Right amount ■ Too much ■ Too little

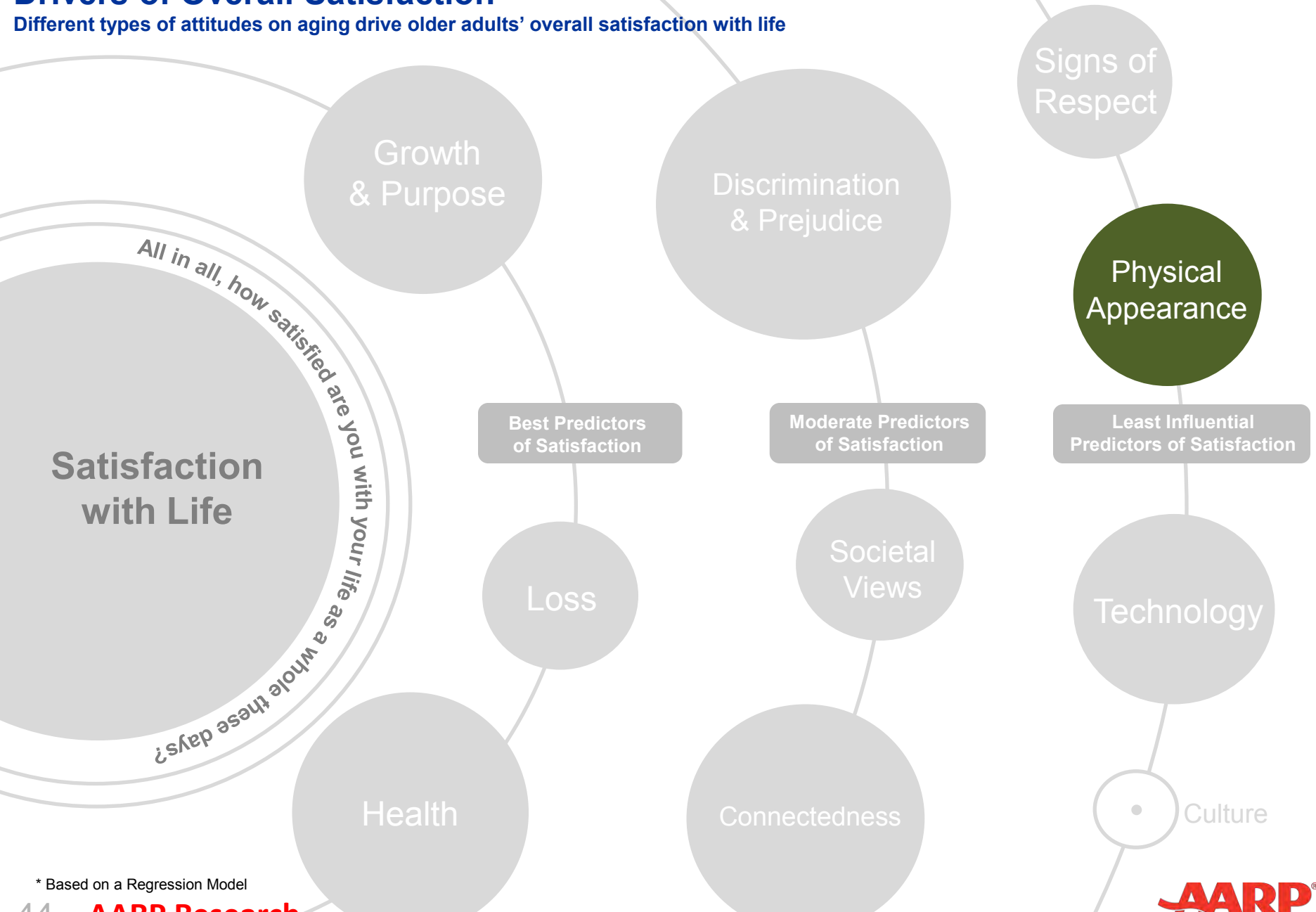
■ Right amount ■ Too much ■ Too little

a b c d - Significantly higher than the letter designation.

Q12/Q13. Do you feel that people your age get too much, too little, or about the right amount of respect from those who are younger/older?

Drivers of Overall Satisfaction*

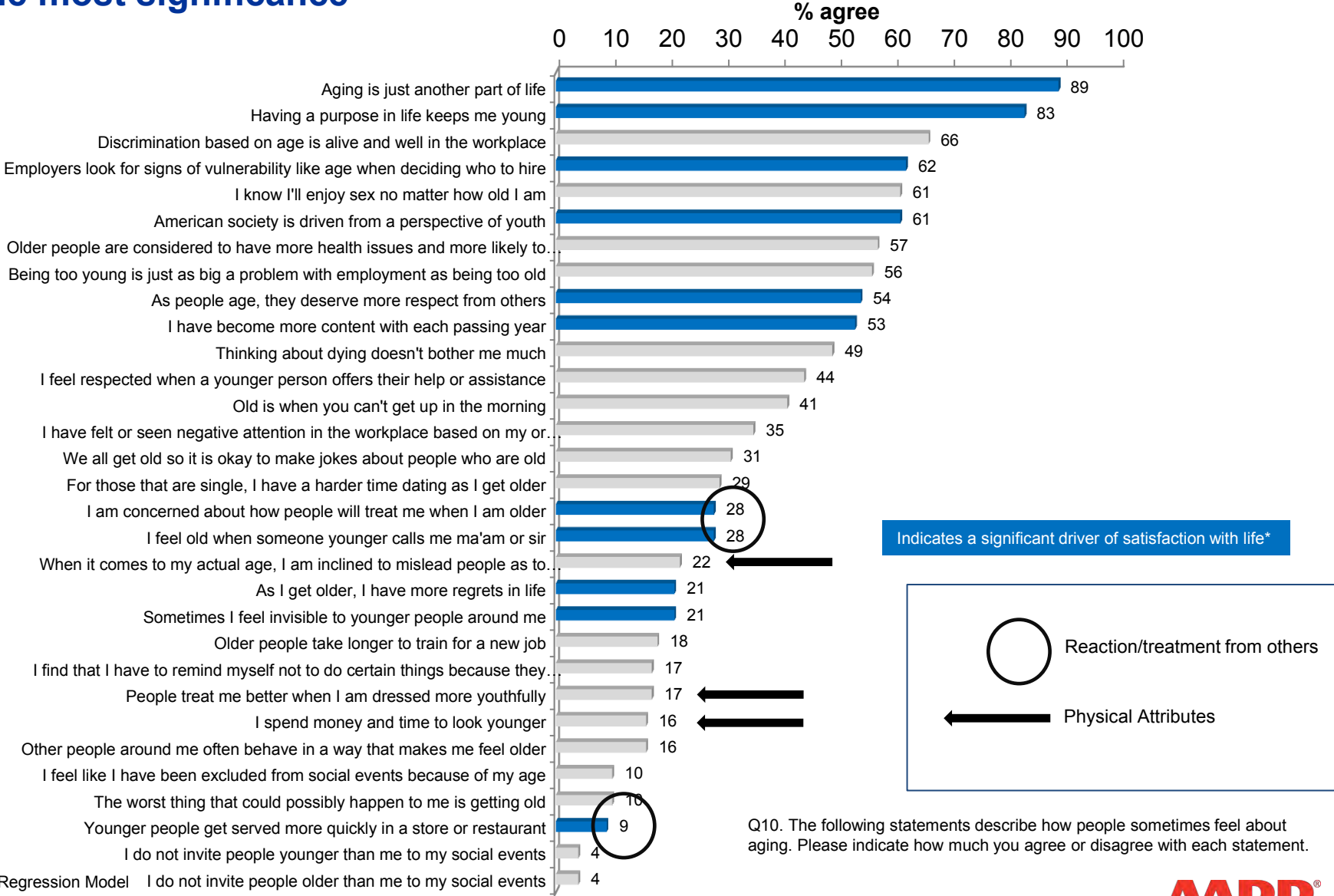
Different types of attitudes on aging drive older adults' overall satisfaction with life



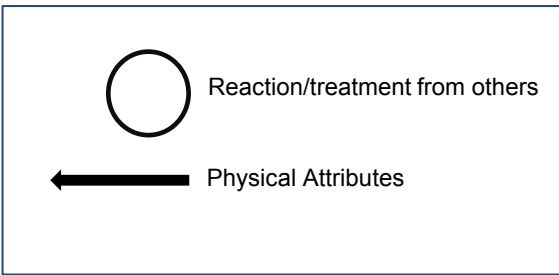
* Based on a Regression Model

Actual physical appearance is not a key factor impacting satisfaction with life. It is the reaction/treatment from others based on the perception of one's age that has the most significance

How people sometimes feel about aging



Indicates a significant driver of satisfaction with life*

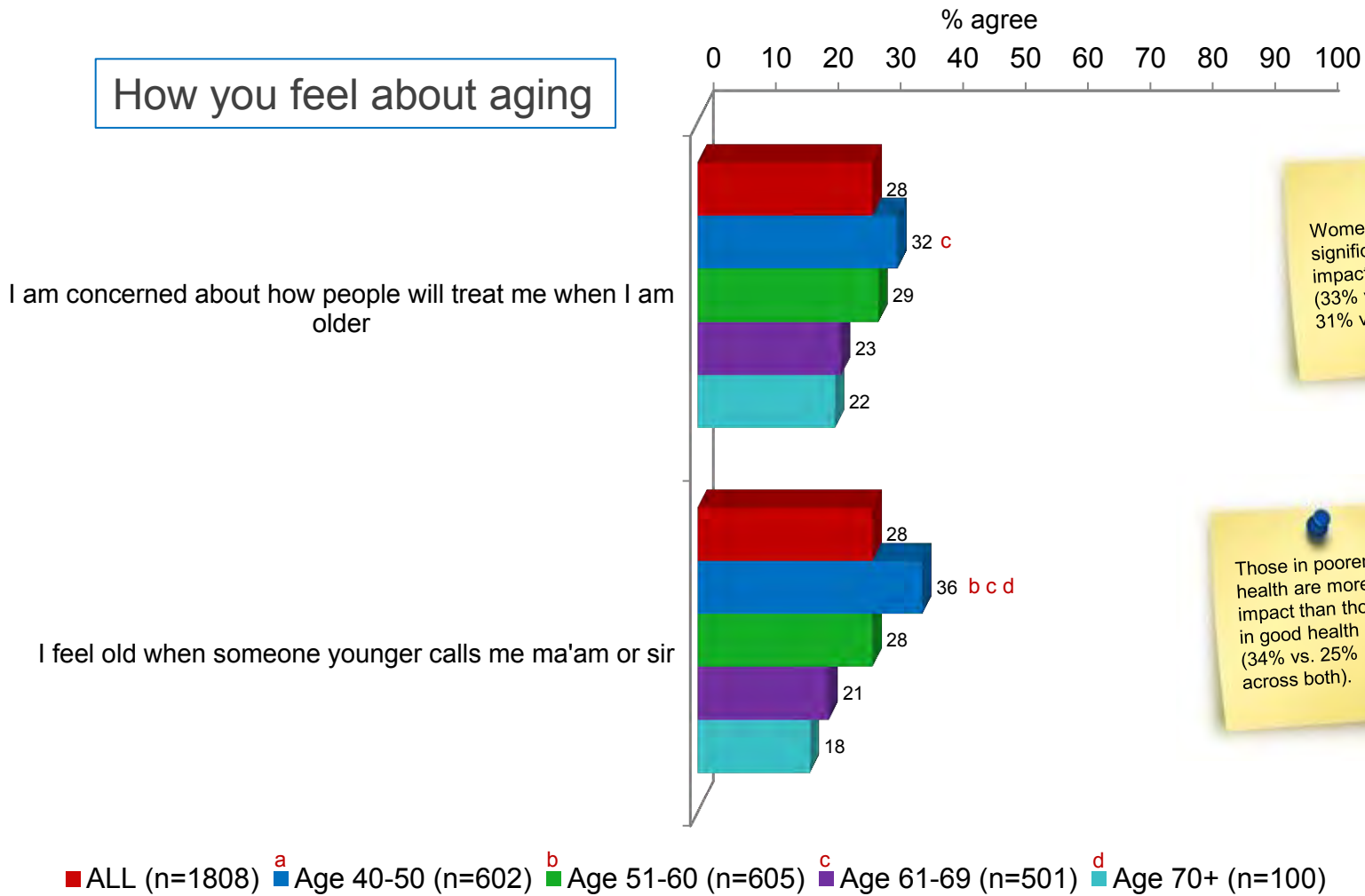


Q10. The following statements describe how people sometimes feel about aging. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

* Based on a Regression Model I do not invite people older than me to my social events

Actual physical appearance is not a key factor impacting satisfaction with life. It is the reaction/treatment from others based on the perception of one's age that has the most significance*. The older you get the less impact it has.

How you feel about aging



Women are significantly more impacted than men (33% vs. 24% and 31% vs. 25%).

Those in poorer health are more impacted than those in good health (34% vs. 25% across both).

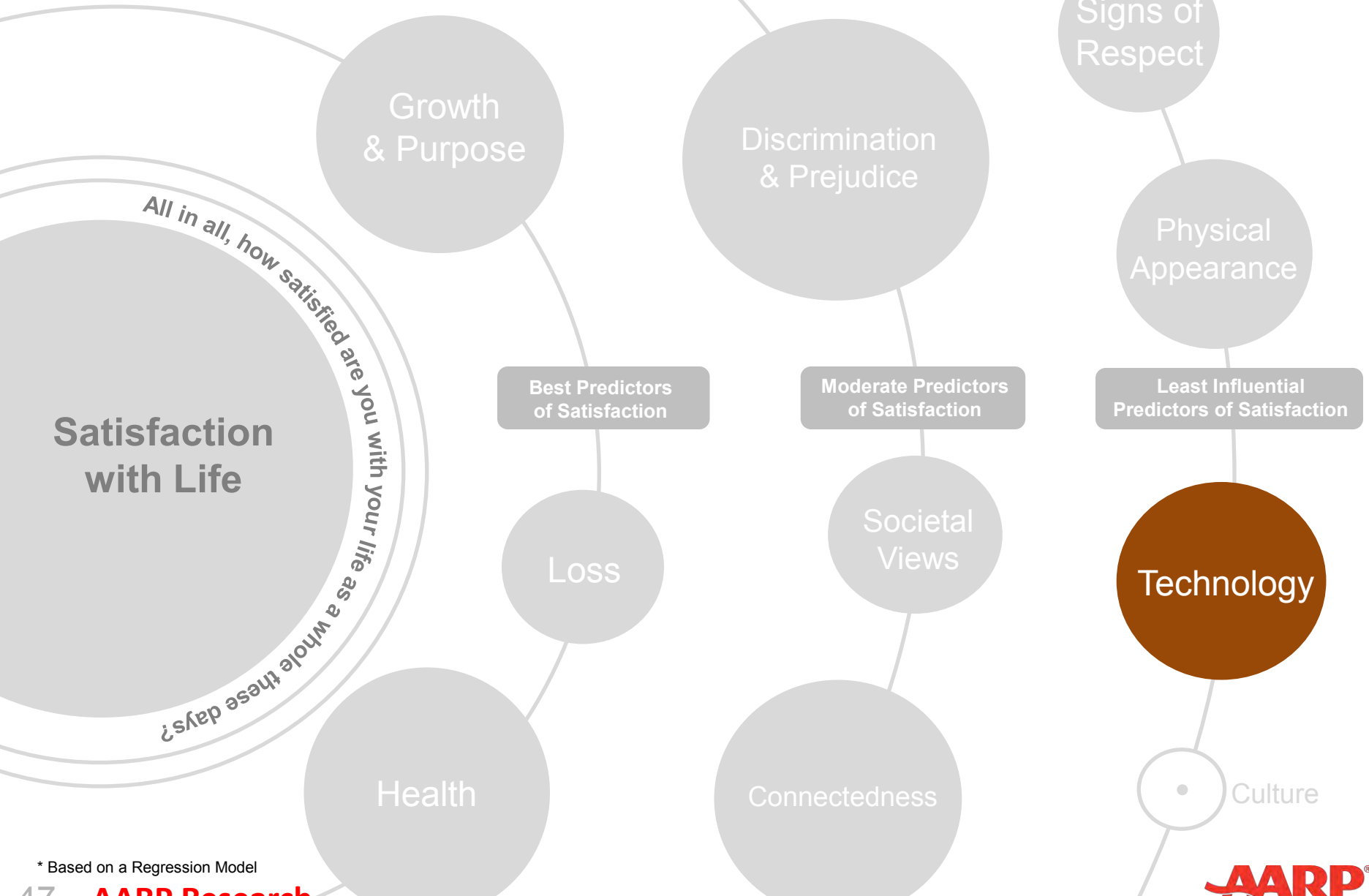
■ ALL (n=1808) ^a Age 40-50 (n=602) ^b Age 51-60 (n=605) ^c Age 61-69 (n=501) ^d Age 70+ (n=100)

* Based on a Regression Model
a b c d - Significantly higher than the letter designation.

Q10. The following statements describe how people sometimes feel about aging. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

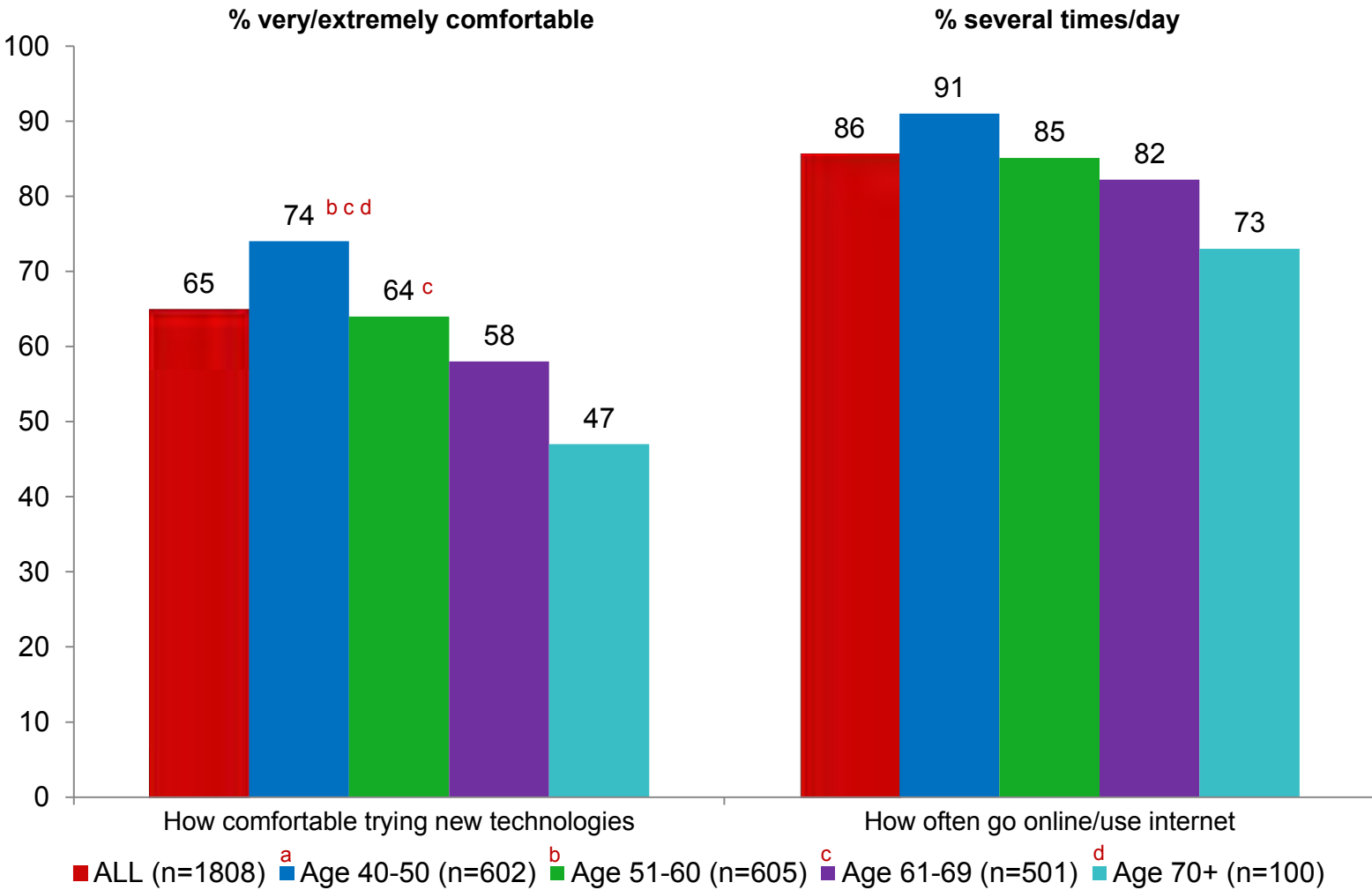
Drivers of Overall Satisfaction*

Different types of attitudes on aging drive older adults' overall satisfaction with life



* Based on a Regression Model

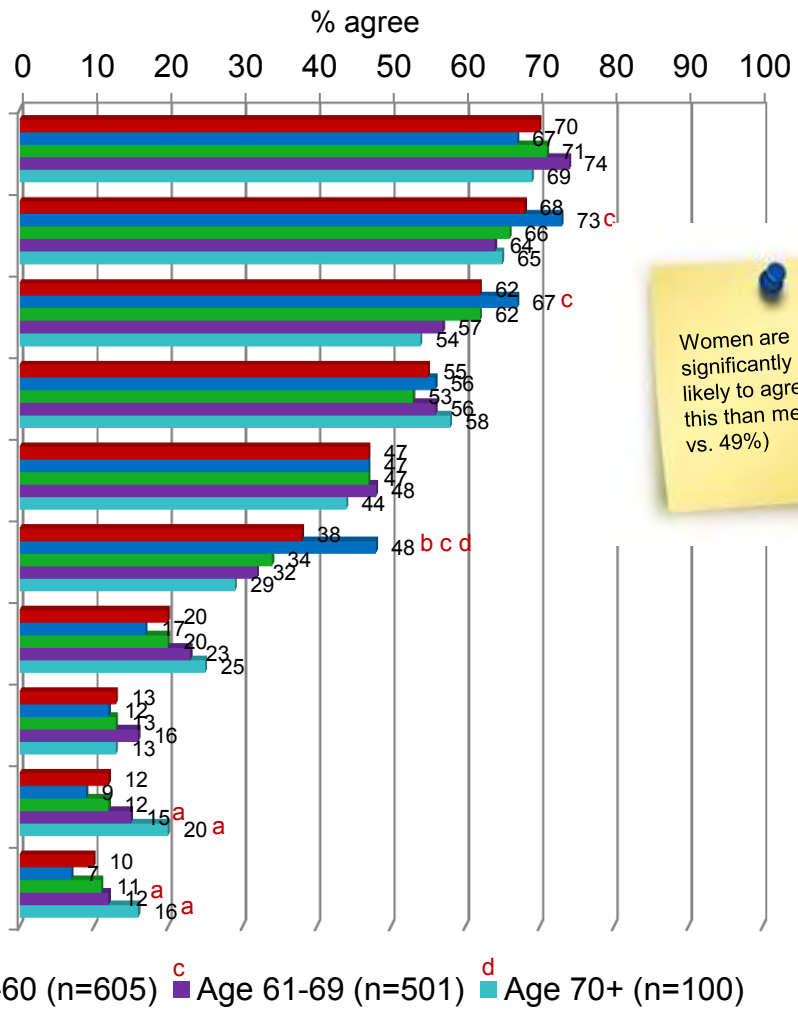
The younger one is, the more comfortable with technology and the more often it is used



a b c d - Significantly higher than the letter designation.

Q16. In general, how comfortable are you trying new technologies (e.g., new electronic devices like smartphones, digital cameras, and Blu-ray players, as well as new software programs, social media sites, and online communities)?
 Q17. About how often do you go online or use the Internet? This includes access from home, work, a mobile device (such as a smartphone), or someplace else.

However, the only attitude about technology that drives satisfaction with life is the fact that the internet has brought people closer together to friends and family



Women are significantly more likely to agree with this than men (61% vs. 49%)

Key Driver*

The internet has brought me closer together to my friends and family

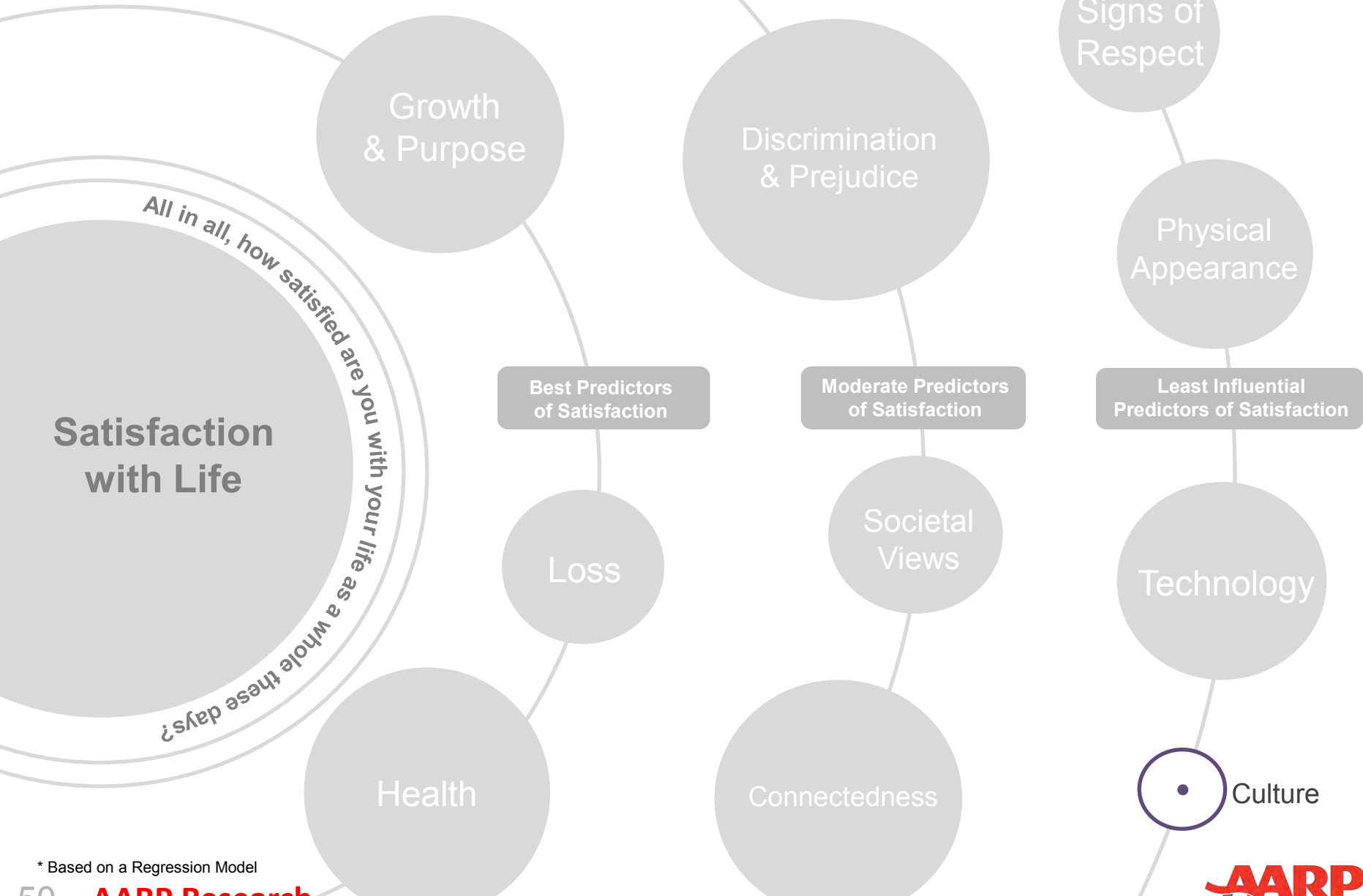
* Based on a Regression Model

a b c d - Significantly higher than the letter designation.

Q18. Below is a series of statements about technology and the Internet. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

Drivers of Overall Satisfaction*

Different types of attitudes on aging drive older adults' overall satisfaction with life



* Based on a Regression Model

Cultural differences exist among the attitudes of aging that drive overall satisfaction with life (See appendix for detailed charts)

	African American	Asian	Hispanic
Growth/Purpose	Strong positive feelings about growth and purpose	Positive feelings about growth and purpose	Feelings are positive but less so than African Americans and Asians
Loss	Do not tend to focus on the psychological negatives about growing old	More likely to see old age as a time of loneliness, depressing time of life, and mainly as a time of loss as compared to African Americans and Hispanics	Do not tend to focus on the psychological negatives about growing old; less likely to have encountered any deaths of loved ones or close friends
Health	Do not let problems with physical health hold them back from doing what they want; Keep as fit and active as possible by exercising	Doesn't rate their health as good as African Americans and Hispanics but less likely to have disability, handicap or chronic disease	More likely to see aging as a time of losing physical independence
Discrimination/Prejudices	Feel young people and strangers treat them better compared to Asians and Hispanics	Feel that older people take longer to train for a job; Receive more doctors shrugging off symptoms because of age	Receive more comments from family members about driving
Physical Appearance	Feel respect when assistance is offered vs. feeling old	Are inclined to mislead people of their actual age; Find that they have to remind themselves not to do certain things because they are not what someone their age would do; Feel treated better when dressed more youthfully; Spend money and time to look younger	Do not focus on the physical appearance aspects of growing old
Connectedness	More likely to see and talk to their mom on a weekly basis as compared to Asians and Hispanics	Least likely to participate in social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter	More likely to see aging as being excluded from things because of age and finding it more difficult to talk about feelings
Technology	Feel in control of technology and using the latest technology is very important to them	More likely to think social media sites are for those that are younger	Comfortable with new technology
Societal Views	Most likely to see society as driven by a perspective of youth	More likely to feel that younger people get served more quickly in a store or restaurant	More likely to see aging as not feeling as involved in society; more likely to feel invisible to younger people
Signs of Respect	Feel that more respect is deserved as one ages and don't get enough from those younger	Feel get right amount of respect from those that are younger	Feel get right amount of respect from those that are younger

Demographics

* Member is based on self reported member age 50 or greater.

Demographics

Single – 31% Married – 69%



Grandparent – 52%



Employed – 62%



4-year college or higher – 59%



Median income - \$75K to \$100K
Median debt - \$5K to \$25K



Own home – 81%

- Q27. What is your current marital status?
- Q31. Are you a grandparent?
- Q32. Do you own or rent your primary residence?
- Q37. What is your current employment status?
- Q38. What is the highest level of education you have received?
- Q39. What is your pre-tax household income from all sources in 2011?
- Q40. Please estimate your total amount of household debt as of 2012. How many people do you have in your life that have been very supportive of you during the past year?

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