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Ageing and Elderly Health in Indigenous Cultures: Researching the Perspectives and Realities

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ABSTRACT This study examines ageing and elderly health in tribal and indigenous communities, bridging subjective experiences and objective health data. It uses mixed methods to analyse qualitative narratives and the 2020 report of India's Longitudinal Ageing Study (LASI), published by the International Institute for Population Sciences and others. Tribal elders report fewer chronic conditions yet lower life satisfaction than non-tribal groups, a paradox linked to underreporting, cultural health views, and healthcare access gaps. The analysis highlights indigenous ontologies framing elders as cultural custodians and epistemologies prioritising holistic well-being over biomedical metrics. Colonial disruptions and socio-economic shifts are shown to erode elder status, compounding health inequities. By advocating integrating indigenous knowledge with blended methodological frameworks, the study underscores the need for research and policies addressing ageing's cultural dimensions. Conclusions stress interdisciplinary policies aligning healthcare with indigenous values to ensure equitable elderly care.