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Senior travelling and its link to an active and healthy ageing

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The silver market is a driving force in the tourism and hospitality industry and one of its fastest growing and most evolving segments. The United Nations (2015) has recognized the fact that the numbers of the older population are growing rapidly, and it has estimated that over two billion people will be aged 60 years and over by the year 2050, which will account for 22% (or one out of five) of the world's population, compared to 10% in 2000. The increased importance of the senior market is not only the result of demographic changes and a worldwide trend towards an ageing population but is also caused by behavioral shifts on the part of increasingly active older adults. Different regions of the world – and even different countries within regions have experienced the demographic ageing of their population in significantly different ways. As people age, the demand situation and patterns of consumption will change significantly. According to Ferrer et al., it is generally accepted that holiday tourism is a positive and healthy pursuit to follow in leisure time providing many benefits to mental and physical health. Very little attention has been given in the literature of the impact of travel behavior on the health and well-being of senior tourists. This paper has a double fold aim: a deeper comprehension of the senior market segment regarding trends, their needs and wants and of how seniors may behave in the coming years when travelling and a step further towards a deeper comprehension on the benefits from leisure travelling linked to an active ageing and wellbeing. Findings generated by this approach may help create innovative ways to address some of the gaps identified in the literature.

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