



# FUTURAGE

A ROAD MAP *for* AGEING RESEARCH



## Healthy Ageing

# Emerging Research Themes and Issues

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# Healthy Ageing theme

The primary task is to identify research priorities and plans related to **healthy ageing and well-being**, by:

- agreeing the **scope** of healthy ageing and well-being;
- **clarifying the overlap/gaps** between this and other themes;
- creating a **coherent framework** for research findings;
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- determining the **key research priorities** in this field.



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## 1<sup>st</sup> Scientific Workshop on Healthy Ageing Newcastle, 15-16<sup>th</sup> March 2010



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# Overarching issues

- Europe as a basic comparative natural population laboratory
- Ability to extend and integrate biological, social, economic aspects of ageing
- Need to build capacity/knowledge/infrastructure in countries that have little experience in ageing research

# International perspectives

- **Current EU Research Agenda on Ageing:**
  - Current health research and healthy ageing – EU. *DG Research, European Commission.*
- **Non- EU views on gaps in healthy ageing research:**
  - Current gaps in healthy ageing research – Canada. *Anne Martin-Matthews, Canadian Institutes of Health Research*
  - Current gaps in healthy ageing research – US. *Richard Suzman, NIA*
  - Cross-national perspectives – Japan. *Craig Willcox, Okinawa International University*

# Sub themes

The Workshop was structured around four sub-themes:

1. Monitoring and resolving inequalities in healthy ageing
2. Interventions for Improved Health and Wellbeing with Ageing and Co-morbidity.
3. Prevention and promotion of healthy ageing
4. Psychosocial factors and healthy ageing

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# Emerging research themes 1.

- Modelling links between disease and functioning (physical and cognitive) over the life course
  - Disease impact may vary across environments
  - Important for planning for the future
- Healthy ageing, work and retirement
  - Links between exit from labour market and pensions, socio-economic status, cultural expectations
- Interrelationship between health and functioning in the oldest old
  - What do oldest old value for quality of life and well-being?

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# Emerging research themes 2.

- The diversity of public policy on health related services
  - Identification of exemplars and wider implementation
  - Comparative effectiveness research
  - Primary and secondary care, access, service configuration, delivery and organisation, relationships with social care
- Ensuring translation of new and existing knowledge
  - Economic modelling/cost benefit/cost utility of technologies
  - Translation to clinical practice
- Identifying target groups for promoting health and wellbeing
  - Anticipatory care systems

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# Emerging research themes 3.

- Identification of markers of ageing from cellular to societal level
  - Do markers modify success of medical interventions?
  - Can biomarkers measure the efficacy of interventions?
- Physical activity, diet/ nutrition, obesity management
  - How can functional decline and onset of new diseases be reduced in different populations and subpopulations?
- Intervention and implementation
  - What subtypes of activity are effective for which outcomes?
  - When can physical activity or nutrition be used as alternatives to medication?

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# Emerging research themes 4.

- **Social/Behavioural Genetics**
  - Disentangling genetic, behavioural and environmental influences on healthy ageing
- **Life course transitions**
  - Impact of health events on restoration or decline of functioning and social/psychological processes involved
- **Personal factors and healthy ageing**
  - Clarifying how personal attributes (personality, ethnicity, gender) impact on healthy ageing
- **Connectedness and orientation**
  - 'Productive ageing/'shrinking' of the life space

# Healthy Ageing: Cross cutting themes

- The “Healthy Ageing” construct
  - Relative importance of physical health and psychological well-being across the life course and in frail populations
  - Integration of views of older people themselves
- Health behaviours and influences on behaviour change
  - Integrated science of behaviour change
- Research to underpin comparative measures to monitor healthy ageing
  - Indicators of SES, functioning, multimorbidity, social engagement

# Healthy Ageing: Cross cutting themes

- Infrastructure
  - Europe as a comparative laboratory
  - Capacity development
- Integration of disciplines
  - Social exclusion & frailty as vulnerability & risk needs biology, psychology and sociology
- Making the best use of what we already know
  - Existing cohorts
  - “Implementation science” / knowledge transfer

# Healthy Ageing: Gaps

- Overlap with biogerontology and genetics
- Mental health
- End of life – ‘healthy ageing and good death’
- Drugs
- Priorities for Eastern Europe



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