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;
- determining the **key research priorities** in this field.
1st Scientific Workshop on Healthy Ageing
Newcastle, 15-16th 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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