



FUTURAGE

A ROAD MAP *for* AGEING RESEARCH

Environments of Ageing

Workstream Leaders:

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Burning Issues for Ageing in Europe

- **How and where to live in old age?**
- **How to keep up with daily activities and social participation?**
 - During active phases of ageing
 - When functional capacity decreases and needs for support and security increase
 - When there is a need for 24-hour care and support in social activity
- **Rapid population ageing – most of all among the very old**
- **Significant burden on public economy**



Burning Issues for Ageing in Europe

- **Mobility is a prerequisite for daily activity, social participation, well-being and health**
- **Technology solutions are important at all levels of person-environment relations as people age**



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Effective & Efficient Person-Environment Related Interventions are Needed

- Home modification services
- Housing provision
- Preventive home visits
- Fall prevention programs
- Geriatric rehabilitation programs
- Out-of-home environments
- Public transportation
- Technology & products

Scarce Scientific Evidence & Weak Implementation

- **Much need for more research on ageing and environment**
- **Paucity of scientific evidence on outcomes and efficient solutions**
 - **Housing**
 - **Out-of-home environments**
 - **Technology and products**
- **Very weak implementation of existing evidence into practice contexts**
 - **In housing provision**
 - **In health care and social services**
 - **In city planning**
 - **In working life**



Ageing and Environments: What Research Can Achieve

- **Understanding of interactions between ageing persons and their physical-technical social surroundings**
- **Understanding how person-environment relationships shape outcomes of ageing (functioning, well-being, falls, health)**
- **Provide the evidence platform for community policy and interventions**



Achievements of Environments of Ageing FUTURAGE Workstream (Workshop in Heidelberg in March 2010 and Its Outcomes)

- **Identification and integration of burning issues of the research area of environments of ageing**
- **Linkage of these issues with current and future societal challenges of Europe**
- **Clarification of the role of user involvement and implementation issues**
- **Clarification of the important role of young scholars**

In-depth treatment of theory, methodology and implementation research during Workshop 2, June 16-18, 2010 in Lund

Methodology of Heidelberg Workshop

- **35 scholars from Austria, Finland, Germany, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Spain, Sweden, the Netherlands, United Kingdom, U.S.**
- **A wide range of disciplines**
- **User representatives**
- **Young scholars**
- **Concentration on existing evidence and research gaps as well as the translation of existing findings to intervention and practice implementation**

Existing Evidence Base



- **There is some evidence that environmental aspects have an influence on functioning and health** [e.g., Wahl et al., 2009, *The Gerontologist*; Iwarsson et al., 2007, *The Gerontologist*]
- **Inconsistent / lacking evidence and mixed conclusions** [e.g., dementia and private home environment]
- **Paucity of systematic and cumulative generation of knowledge at large**

What Needs to be Done: Towards an Emerging Roadmap for Ageing and Environments



(1) General Issues:

- *How to make a “unique” Road-Map for Europe?*
- **More joint effort between countries**
- **User-driven generation of research questions**
- **Need for more efficient**
 - **synthesis of state-of-the art on different issues**
 - **utilisation of existing data, for cross-national research**

What Needs to be Done: Towards an Emerging Roadmap for Ageing and Environments



(2) General priorities:

- **Focus on the bigger picture, in a European perspective**
- **Always keep a life course perspective**
- **Educate, communicate, translate, intervene and implement – challenges for researchers as well as for funding bodies**

What Needs to be Done: Towards an Emerging Roadmap for Ageing and Environments



(3) Examples of important research areas:

- **Clarifying the role of different types of home settings for the future (full range of older adults including cognitively impaired / those with disability)**
- **Clarifying the potential of safe and satisfying mobility for the future (full range of older adults including cognitively impaired / those with disability)**
- **How will technology change quality of life in later life?**
- **Research on the potential of work environments for older individuals must gain high priority**

What Needs to be Done: Towards an Emerging Roadmap for Ageing and Environments



(4) Important cutting-across areas:

- **Invest in interdisciplinary research – build new alliances**
- **Consider forthcoming cohorts – need for longitudinal studies**
- **Consider the heterogeneity of old age – from a person-environment perspective**
- **Invest into young scholars from a diversity of disciplines**

Thanks a Lot for Your Attention!



Photo: M. Karman



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