Promoting healthy active ageing in a changing world: Opportunities and challenges

Mima Cattan
Professor in Public Health
Northumbria University
Newcastle upon Tyne, UK
The global population is **AGEING**

We are going to be **SWAMPED by OLDIES**

**PENSIONS** are causing a **FINANCIAL CRISIS**

The **COST of CARE** will **CRIPPLE SOCIETY**

**OLDER ADULTS** are **NOT PRODUCTIVE**

**OLDER PEOPLE** are a **BURDEN** on society
1. Population over 60 by region

Source: World Population Prospects: The 2004 Revision Population Database, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs

From HelpAge International http://www.helpage.org/resources/ageing-data/global-ageing-statistics/
Percentage of population aged 65+ in EU-27 2010 (ONS 2011)
Life span versus life course

Lifespan

Life course

years

years
Older people are not a homogenous group

- Age range 50 – 120
- Gender
- Affluence / Poverty
- Cultural affinity / background
- Religious affinity
- Ethnicity / Migrant group
- Living circumstances
- Health status (mental and physical)
- Functional / cognitive status
- Working / Not working
- Level of ‘vulnerability’
- ....and so on
The determinants of ‘Active Ageing’ (WHO 2002)

- Gender
- Economic determinants
- Health and social services
- Behavioural determinants
- Social determinants
- Personal determinants
- Physical environment

Active Ageing

Culture
Active ageing

.... is the process of optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age.

(WHO 2002)
Healthy Ageing is

....the **process** of *optimising* *equal opportunities for health* to enable older people to take an active part in society and to enjoy an independent and good quality of life.

(Swedish National Institute of Public Health 2007)
Main constituents of healthy ageing
(from UK social survey of people 50+, in EuroHealthNet 2012)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health</th>
<th>65</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Psychological factors</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social roles &amp; activities</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finances</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social relationships</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbourhoods</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How older people define mental well-being

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal resources:</th>
<th>Individual characteristics:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘good health;</td>
<td>‘self esteem’;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘ability to adjust to change/resilience’;</td>
<td>‘self efficacy’;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘freedom from stress and worries’;</td>
<td>‘contentment’;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘freedom from financial constraints’;</td>
<td>‘independence and control’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘availability of instrumental, emotional and informational support’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Environmental resources:</th>
<th>Attitudes:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘availability of support from social networks’, e.g. neighbours, close friends, close family, and needed services;</td>
<td>‘to keep oneself involved with change’;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘safe environment’</td>
<td>‘to keep oneself busy’.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Giuntoli & Cattan 2010 unpublished)
What older people say they want

- To be seen as a resource and ‘be allowed’ some responsibilities
- To have meaningful activities, where skills can be shared
- To be able to get out and about to see their friends
- To have a companion and satisfying relationships
- To have good health – physical and mental
- To have a sense of security and be able to feel safe
- To have congenial living arrangements
- Not to be ‘done to’, patronised or treated as passive recipients

Cattan et al. (2002 – 2011 research with ‘older people’)
Buys et al. (2008 older people with intellectual disability)
But are they we listened to.....?
Policy history

• **2001 Stockholm European Council**: strategy to cope with economic challenges linked to ageing population

• **2006 European Commission**: The demographic future of Europe – from challenge to opportunity:
  – Demographic renewal
  – Employment
  – Productivity, competitiveness
  – Integration of migrants
  – Sustainable public finances
Europe 2020 - A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth

• Labour market segmentation;
• Tax and benefit systems to make work pay; encouragement of self-employment;
• Work and family life;
• Promote new forms of work-life balance & active ageing policies; increase gender equality;
• Implementation of social dialogue outcomes;
• European Qualifications Framework - includes adult education;
• Partnerships between education/training and work (European Commission 2010)
European Innovation Partnership 2011 for active and healthy ageing

• Three main objectives:
  1. Enable EU citizens to lead healthy, active and independent lives while ageing;
  2. Improve sustainability & efficiency of social & healthcare systems;
  3. Boost competitiveness & markets for innovative products & services that respond to ageing challenge.

• The partnership focuses on
  – prevention and health promotion;
  – integrated care;
  – Active and healthy lifestyles and independent living

• Its overarching target is to increase by two years, average number of healthy life years at birth within the EU-27 population by 2020.
The initiative aims to:

• reverse the idea that older people are a burden on society
• help create better job opportunities & working conditions for older people in Europe;
• help older people play an active role in society;
• encourage healthy ageing and independent living
• Promotes active ageing in three areas:
  – **Employment** - We must give older workers better chances in the labour market
  – **Participation in society** – We seek to ensure greater recognition of what older people bring to society and create more supportive conditions for them
  – **Independent living** – small changes can make a big difference to people with health impairments and disabilities.

Active ageing empowers us to remain in charge of our own lives as long as possible.
A lot of assumptions are still made about what older people need and aspire to.

‘Being old is when you know all the answers but nobody asks you the questions’
Challenges and Opportunities

• Older people are not heard
• Health promotion / public health given scant attention
• Emphasis on cost rather than on contribution of older people
• Focus on technological rather than human solutions

• Flexible innovative collaborative solutions can benefit all age groups
• Acceptable solutions by involving older people
• Age friendly environments are important for mental and physical health
• Transition into old age means different things to different people
Thank You

- Contact:
- mima.cattan@northumbria.ac.uk