

AGEING TRAJECTORIES OF HEALTH: LONGITUDINAL OPPORTUNITIES AND SYNERGIES

Kaloyan Kamenov^{1,2}, Francisco Félix Caballero^{1,2}, María Cabello^{1,2}, Marta Miret^{1,2}, Blanca Mellor-Marsá^{1,2}, José Luis Ayuso-Mateos^{1,2}, Josep Maria Haro^{1,3}

¹ Centro Investigación Biomédica en Red de Salud Mental (CIBERSAM), Instituto de Salud Carlos III, Madrid, Spain

² Department of Psychiatry, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Madrid, Spain,

³ Parc Sanitari Sant Joan de Déu, Barcelona, Spain

THE PROBLEM

People age differently. Many demographic, lifestyle, genetic and socio-economic factors determine the diversity in the ageing pathways. At the moment, evidence of the factors that determine healthy ageing pathways is fragmented. However, the overwhelming evidence of a rapidly increasing proportion of older people in the population in Europe and around the globe, and its enormous economic impact fundamentally altering health and social policies, calls for action. It is important to recognise similarities and differences in ageing patterns within and across populations.

THE ATHLOS PROJECT

A consortium of 14 partners from 11 European countries (figure 1), with experts from areas of demography, sociology, clinical medicine, epidemiology and public health, health statistics, economics, data management, and policy.

The Consortium includes the AGE Platform Europe, a European network of approximately 150 organisations of and for people aged 50 or over.

OBJECTIVES OF ATHLOS

The objective of the ATHLOS project is to achieve a better understanding of ageing by identifying patterns and determinants of healthy ageing pathways, detecting individuals at risk, and proposing timed interventions to promote healthy ageing.

Athlos:

- Will produce a harmonised dataset from 20 recent longitudinal studies of ageing, comprising more than 341,000 subjects.
- Will identify patterns of healthy ageing trajectories and their determinants.
- Will determine and operationalise a more valid definition of old age.
- Will translate findings, by means of knowledge translation methodologies and microsimulation exercises, into evidence-informed policy recommendations.
- Will disseminate and make available the resources created, the pooled datasets, the findings, and policy recommendations arising from the project to facilitate the use of those resources and the scalability of ATHLOS products.

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

The ATHLOS consortium is currently involved in the harmonisation of variables across data sets and waves, identifying the core set of variables in each of the relevant domains considered in ATHLOS. A metric of health which can be compared across data sets and waves is being developed, together with the statistical models which will be employed in the subsequent stages of the project.

Figure 1: Participating centers



CONTRIBUTORS

World Health Organization, Switzerland
Lithuanian University of Health Sciences, Lithuania
NIPH National Institute of Public Health, Czech Republic

<http://athlosproject.eu>

Communications Officer:
Contact: 34 914972447
dissemination.athlos@uam.es



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