



## European scientists in search for the secrets of well-being of the elderly in Europe: from the mental and physical health to the subjective perception of their quality of life

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What are the secrets of well-being of populations with increasing elderly people, the key elements to help them to stay longer socially and professionally active and thus also to help young people, by supporting the new generations? What are the best welfare models to support the aging process without creating inequities between different generations? How to ensure health care for the elderly and allocate resources for new families, encouraging birthrates, curb inequality in terms of life expectancy related to different education levels and socioeconomic status? Several team of scientists and experts are going to find an answer to these questions to draw the future of Europe by working on international and interdisciplinary research projects that have won grants from JPI More Years, Better Life for a total of about 7 million of Euro.

The funded projects have been presented in occasion of the 2016 Conference of the Joint Programming Initiative "More Years Better Lives" (<http://www.jp-demographic.eu/>), in Rome at the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart - A. Gemelli Hospital.

The conference is organized by the Italian representative of JPI MYBL (Prof. Paolo M. Rossini, Dr Rosanna Moroni), on behalf of the Health Ministry and the Ministry for Universities and Science and in collaboration with the Chairman (Dr. Edvard Beem) and the Secretariat of the JPI MYBL (ZonMw, the Netherlands) and the General Assembly.

**Crew Project - Care, retirement and wellbeing of older people across different welfare regimes.**

The project's main aim is searching for the determinants of overall wellbeing of elderly people, taking account of physical, mental health, subjective well-being, subjective perceptions of their age and economic situation. CREW is a project of an interdisciplinary group of six institutions in five countries.

"Our research will cover four themes - Professor Bruno Arpino of the Department of Political and Social Sciences of the Universitat Pompeu Fabra (UPF) in Barcelona said. First, we analyze factors that affect well-being of the elderly population, by considering aspects related to mental and physical health, subjective well-being. Second, we will study how much taking care of others (grandchildren, parents, spouse, etc.) affects well-being and professional decisions. Then, we will analyze the challenges to pension systems as a result of changes in family dynamics and labor market. In particular, we will study how to ensure fair and stable pension systems. Finally we will examine the population of seniors with no close relatives, his health characteristics and conditions".

**Emmy Project - European Welfare Models and Mental Wellbeing in Final Years of Life**

The overarching aim of this interdisciplinary, comparative research project is to improve our knowledge and understanding of how different welfare models and related policies, as well as health and social care service approaches, can benefit from adaptation in order to target mental wellbeing in the oldest-old moving from the traditional emphasis of disorders towards mental health. The general objective of the EMMY Project is to contribute to the development of good welfare policies to support mental wellbeing in the oldest-old.

The specific objectives are 1) to delineate the concept of mental wellbeing at old age and the links between welfare policies and such wellbeing, 2) to support the exchange of public policies with positive impacts on mental wellbeing at old age through thorough analysis of existing policies and 3) to develop a new research-based tool for assessing the mental wellbeing impact of welfare policies in old people.

EMMY will produce new knowledge on how mental wellbeing of frail old people in homebased, social care or residential care is affected by welfare models and by the balance between health care, social care, third sector and informal care. The age range will mainly focus on the oldest old, ie 85plus.

The project will look for variation in mental wellbeing among older people across different welfare states and welfare regime types, and assess whether this variation can be linked to specific aspects such as level and organization of short or long term health care, social care and benefits, and the role of family. Linking mental wellbeing at old age with welfare policies is unique and will produce new knowledge and guidance for policy makers.

**Weltransim Project - Demographic change and intra and intergenerational distribution: Modelling the impact of different welfare models.**

The WELTRANSIM project aims to explain how the ageing process affects the transfers of resources between age groups and also between people of the same generation. Population ageing implies more pressure to social security systems, more need for long-term care and, in general, a change in the care systems of the different countries. Depending on how people are secured by different policies of the welfare state, this effects will impact differently to the rest of the society (family policies, long-term care policies...). The role of family transfers (both in money and time) will be also crucial to understand how societies react to the population ageing process. The ageing process, together with policy intervention of different welfare states, can lead to different sources of inequalities: between age groups (there is currently a shift of public resources to older people in the majority of the OECD countries), and also within generations (between families with and without children, for example). The direction and magnitude of such inequalities will depend, for example, on the pension system structure: "pay as you go" systems are a direct system to transfer resources from working age population to older population, and have also implications in terms of intragenerational equity (families financing, with private transfers, children who will be the future working age population). Another source of inequality emerge between education groups: it is well known that the more educated live longer and in a better economic position. So, the "benefits" of increasing life expectancy does not distributes equally between education groups, and probably won't be the costs.

Another central objective of the project relies on investigating political aspects related to the ageing process, particularly the so-called "generational conflict". The intuition behind this hypothesis is simple: the old population has probably different preferences in comparison with the younger population and therefore they demand different allocations of public resources. In a framework of a representative democracy and population ageing, this means that policies are shaped by the desires of the older people.

The project CIRCLE explores the effects of the ongoing economic and demographic changes on:

- 1) the intergenerational distribution of income and
- 2) the intra-household informal insurance of care and income risks in Europe.

The aim of CIRCLE is to provide new empirical evidence of the impact of the interaction between the economic and demographic changes and the welfare systems on the distribution of the resources, rights and responsibilities between generations, Claudia Villosio, from Center for research on Pensions and Welfare Policies - Collegio Carlo Alberto (Italy). The major research topics analysed in the project cover the whole EU countries giving a truly cross-country perspective. The project will use a variety of statistical and econometric techniques, including longitudinal econometric technique. European Survey data such as EU-LFS, EU-SILC, SHARE and the CSB-MIPI dataset will be exploited in the analysis. In addition EUROMOD, the EU-wide tax-benefit microsimulation model, will also be used. Project CIRCLE will last 36 months. First results will be available in month 12

#### AgeWellAccounts Project - Age-Specific Wellbeing-and Transfer Accounts: Evaluating Intergenerational Support

It is of utmost importance for societies to understand how intergenerational support can be adapted to ageing populations while ensuring that support is provided at life stages when it is needed most. The AgeWellAccounts project aims at the provision of data and methods to evaluate institutions of intergenerational support across European countries.

In the first step, a National Wellbeing and Transfer Account (NWTa) is built up by combining age-specific information on important dimensions of wellbeing with National Transfer Accounts. The combined dataset contains comprehensive age-specific information on the economic situation of people, the way they are spending their time, their health and their subjective wellbeing together with information on the organization of transfers between generations.

In the second step, based on the NWTa as well as on micro-data and experiments, a detailed analysis how the different dimensions of wellbeing change over the life course is carried out. This analysis identifies the main determinants of wellbeing at each stage of life and explores the relation between wellbeing and intergenerational support.

The project is structured into three work packages that capture the following dimensions of wellbeing: (1) the economic situation, (2) the use of time, (3) health, happiness and subjective life satisfaction.

<http://www.jp-demographic.eu/>

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#### Notes for editors:

To interview the Italian coordinator of the conference, please write to [paolomaria.rossini@policlinicogemelli.it](mailto:paolomaria.rossini@policlinicogemelli.it)