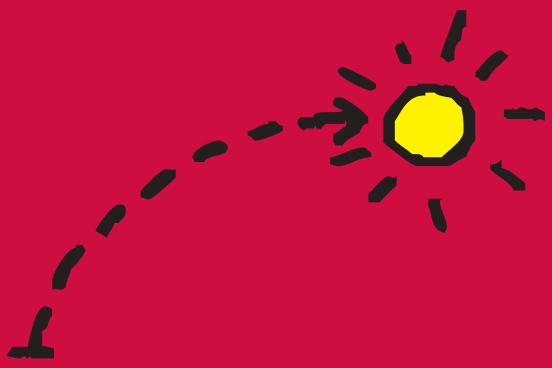
PUBLICATIONS OF THE ACADEMY OF FINLAND 11/03

Finnish Research Programme on Ageing 2000–2002

EVALUATION REPORT



ACADEMY OF FINLAND

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Finnish Research Programme on Ageing 2000–2002
EVALUATION REPORT

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Academy of Finland in brief

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Preface

The Research Programme on Ageing (ITU = Ikääntymisen Tutkimusohjelma) was launched by the Academy of Finland in 1999 and implemented from the beginning of 2000 to the end of 2002. Besides the Academy of Finland, the co-operating organisations included four ministries (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour and Ministry of the Environment), Social Insurance Institution, Finnish National Fund for Research and Development, National Technology Agency Tekes, Finnish Work Environment Fund, Statistics Finland and the Association of Finnish Local Authorities. This is the second multidisciplinary research programme on ageing in Finland – the first programme was carried out in 1986-1989.

A total of 21 research projects were included in the Programme. The programme memorandum defined the relevant research themes under two main categories: 1) The study of ageing processes, and 2) Studying the challenges presented by ageing of individuals and the population.

The general objective of the Programme was to produce information that can help to deal with the problems and challenges presented by the ageing of the population. The Programme was expected to generate information for practical application in various sectors, from housing and employment to health policy planning and treatment methods. At the same time, the programme was intended to strengthen the involvement of the academic research community in the ongoing public debate on ageing.

The Academy of Finland expects the results of its research programmes to be evaluated after the termination of the programme. The Research Programme on Ageing was evaluated by Professor Riitta Jallinoja from the University of Helsinki, Professor Alan Walker from the University of Sheffield, Professor Marianne Schroll from Copenhagen University Hospital and Research Professor Svein Olav Daatland from Norwegian Social Research. Researcher Ulla Saalasti-Koskinen from the National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health (Stakes) acted as expert secretary for the evaluation.

The evaluation was focused on the following issues:
1) relevance of the Programme, 2) preparatory work for the Programme, 3) launching the Programme, 4) selecting the projects, 5) funding resources, 6) co-ordination, 7) co-operation, 8) international co-operation, 9) effectiveness of the Programme (output), 10) individual research projects, and 11) fulfilment of the Programme aims. Recommendations made by the Panel are based on these issues.

This publication includes the report of the evaluation group. The abstracts and other information about the Research Programme on Ageing are available on the Academy's web pages at www.aka.fi/Publications.

Riitta Jallinoja
Professor, Chair of the Evaluation Group

1 Introduction

Ageing research has rich traditions in Finland, both in the medical and social issues. The Research Programme on Ageing was initiated as an attempt to promote basic and applied research on ageing and to strengthen co-operation among various disciplines active in this field.

The purpose was to explore the ageing process, its nature and underlying factors as a biological, psychological, social, cultural and societal phenomenon. The concern was with the social and cultural dimensions of ageing, with functional capacity and maintaining it with increasing age, and with the biological foundations of ageing.

The Programme had a two-phase call for proposals. At the first phase, short plans of intent were invited. The plans submitted were reviewed by a Steering Group, which consisted of members of the organisations participating in the Programme. Altogether 100 plans were received and 51 proposals were chosen to go to the second phase. The Academy of Finland invited an international panel to review the proposals at the second stage. The Expert Panel evaluated the proposals on the basis of the following criteria: scientific quality, originality, innovativeness, relevance, scientific competence of the applicant, organisation and co-operation. Altogether 21 projects were selected to go to the second phase.

The final funding decisions were made by the sub-committee of the Academy in co-operation with the representatives of other funding agencies. The total amount of money applied for by the 21 selected projects was EUR 14.5 million, and the actual funding was EUR 3.4 million, with EUR 2.4 million from the Academy and the rest from other funding agencies. At this stage some of the funding organisations who participated in the planning of the Programme, withdraw from the Programme, partly because they felt that the projects selected were not relevant to them.

The Research Programme on Ageing consisted of 21 interrelated projects within ageing research. Close to 200 researchers from 12 universities and research institutes were involved. The projects participating in the Programme were from different disciplines and were grouped under five thematic headings outlined by co-ordinators;

1) Biological ageing and neuroscience, 2) Functional capacity and well-being,
3) Ageing, work and economy,
4) Everyday life and environment, and
5) Elderly care and services. All these categories comprised four projects except the third one, which included five projects.

The co-ordination contract was signed between the Academy of Finland and the School of Public Health at the University of Tampere. The budget for co-ordination amounted to around EUR 170, 000. The Executive Co-ordinator (PhD Marja Saarenheimo) worked only 60 per cent of her working time in the Programme and the Programme Director (Professor Marja Jylhä) worked in addition to her regular duties. Co-ordination included both scientific and administrative tasks (e.g.

building up contacts and promotion of multidisciplinary co-operation) as well as practical tasks (e.g. arranging seminars and meetings).

This report is based on the independent assessment of the Programme by the Evaluation Group. The evaluation panel took place in May 2003. The evaluation was carried out on the basis of the extended abstracts provided by the project leaders, three most important publications selected by the project teams, the report by the co-ordinators, the Programme report and the Programme memorandum. The overall impression of the output of the Programme was highly positive. The Evaluation Group will, however, consider in this report more those circumstances of the Programme that failed to reach the ideal. By doing this, the Evaluation Group hopes that these remarks will be useful when planning future research programmes.

2 Relevance of the Programme

In general, the relevance of the Programme was rated good; this concerns both the research themes and the projects involved. In some projects, however, the overall theme of ageing played too minor a role. It is recommended that such projects and also some other should demonstrate their relevance to ageing more clearly.

Political relevance is important to assess in case of many research programmes, particularly in this type of programme, but political relevance is not easy to evaluate without any discussions with politicians, as they were not accompanied in this Research Programme. Some projects were not politically relevant in respect of general objectives of the Programme, but they were practically relevant.

Scientifically the relevance ranged from high-level to low medium. It was difficult to evaluate some of the projects as they were only half-completed at the time of the evaluation. Some projects were already in progress before the Programme was actually launched, while others were started at the beginning of the Programme. The latter projects particularly had only preliminary results to present.

The social relevance of the Programme will be evaluated separately by two evaluators.

3 Preparatory work

This was not the first research programme on ageing carried out in Finland; the first programme was executed in 1986-1989. However, no information of the first programme was available for the evaluation group. Especially the background of the earlier programme and the experiences gained from it would have been of great interest, as well as how these were taken into account in the planning of the 'second' Programme on ageing.

The scope of the Programme was wide covering various disciplines. The Programme memorandum defined the relevant research themes under two main categories: 1) The study of ageing processes, 2) Studying the challenges presented by the ageing of individuals and the population. The Programme was more medically than socially orientated.

The preparatory work for the Programme was well done, but it lacked certain fundamental elements, such as ageing people themselves and people working with ageing people as well as welfare state research and family research. These are very relevant in terms of the Programme and should have been included at the early stage of the preparatory work.

The research frame of the Programme was executed in a top-down way. And one can therefore ask whether some other themes would also have emerged if the frame had been bottom-up. It would probably have been fruitful to give the perspective of the ageing people themselves a more prominent role in the research frame of bottom-up.

4 Launching the Programme

There was a two-phase call for the proposals. At first phase, the Academy of Finland received one hundred plans of intent which were reviewed by the Steering Group. Altogether 51 proposals went through to the second phase. An international panel evaluated the more detailed proposals, and the final funding decision was made by the subcommittee of the Academy of Finland in co-operation with the representatives of the other funding agencies. Finally, a total of 21 projects were selected and included into the programme.

The large number of applications submitted for the Programme was a success in such a small country as Finland, considering that ageing research has a relatively short history and has not yet established itself distinctively as a discipline of its own. For these reasons it was only justified that a wide range of approaches was given the opportunity to be included in the Programme.

5 Selecting the projects

The programme benefited highly from the procedure to have an international panel who reviewed the applications and selected the projects, because this entailed objectivity. In a small country such as Finland, problems relating to legal incompetence might easily occur. More information would have been needed to explain the reasons why some of the funding agencies left the Programme at this stage; the co-ordinators' report brought up the lack of relevance as the only reason for the withdrawal. All the 21 projects continued in the Programme in spite of the cuts made for each project. It was not clearly expressed how the projects changed their plans with less funding. Such changes in funding would have required renegotiations with the project leaders about the new scope of the projects.

No plan was made for the allocation of money among the new and the ongoing projects within the programme, and it was also quite astonishing that only one third of the projects were new. A larger number of new projects would have allowed a better start for collaboration between the projects, and also increased inter-, multi- and transdisciplinarity in the programme. It seems to be quite difficult for a project to create new collaboration if it has been in progress for years and already established the regular working routines of its own.

The Research Programme run for three years, which seems to be too short a time for any research programme. First of all, you cannot expect any final results within three years from a new project. Secondly, you cannot expect fresh multidisciplinarity within such a short time, particularly when some of the projects are new and others already in progress. Therefore, a research programme should last at least four years and some kind of follow-up would also be advisable.

All the 21 projects involved represented a wide range of different disciplines, but the main emphasis in the Programme was on clinical and biomedical research. More social research would have been welcomed in the Programme, especially family and welfare research, which were totally missing as was the older people's voice. The international panel that selected the 21 projects paid attention to the fact that the applications for research on quality of life, demography and psychology were also missing. A broader invitation would probably have made the Research Programme more attractive and better reachable to researchers from these fields. Despite certain elements were missing, the selected projects covered a relevant area of ageing research.

It was disappointing that so few interdisciplinary projects were set up. One reason for this could be the character of ageing research itself as it seems to be hard to integrate disciplines that greatly differ from one another under collaboration. Disciplines such as biology and sociology tend to cling to approaches they have established in the course of decades. However, ageing research need inter-, multi- and transdisciplinary approach. The obstacles confronted in this respect within the Programme should be analysed and reported in order to facilitate the establishment of more integrated collaboration.

A special character of the projects involved in the Programme was the use of PhD students as principal researchers. As researchers the PhD students are not as competent as senior researchers, and in this Programme too much responsibility was entrusted to junior researchers. If a senior researcher had funding for only a couple of months, he/she could not have enough time for supervision and for his/her own contribution within the project. Students might also have difficulties carrying out research in accordance with the objectives set for the project if these differed from the demands the university had imposed on their theses. In particular, innovative research with the aim to produce new knowledge cannot be expected from PhD students. All this made us ask whether the main purpose of the Programme was researcher training, production of new knowledge or something else? We therefore suggest that it is sensible to separate PhD training from the mainstream research programme.

Only few projects had finished their work within three years and published their final results by the end of the Programme. New and large projects in particular lacked final results but fortunately had plans to publish them in the future.

6 Funding

The main source of funding for the projects was the Programme funding itself but several projects received funding from other agencies as well. Some projects received half or more of their funding from other organisations, and some of the projects did not have any external funding. Overall, it was seen that the funding of the Programme was just one part of a larger entity.

None of the projects was granted the amount of money they had applied for. The total amount of money applied for by the 21 projects selected into the Programme was EUR 14.5 million while the actual funding granted accounted for EUR 3.2 million. The amount of money applied for by the projects ranged from about EUR 150,000 to EUR 750,000; the projects that applied for more than EUR 500,000 were also cut most.

Cutting the funding to this extent was disappointing and such a policy is not reasonable. The main problem here is not the total amount of money reserved for the programme but the budget reduction each project had to make. There should also be renegotiations if cutting funding essentially in order to make clear how to carry out research in a new situation. A model of full funding of a smaller number of projects would be better than a model of more projects with less money.

7 Programme co-ordination

The co-ordination contract was signed between the Academy of Finland and the School of Public Health at the University of Tampere. The executive co-ordinator worked 60 per cent of her working time in the Programme, and the Programme Director worked in addition to her regular duties. The total budget for co-ordination was approx. EUR 170,000, which did not cover the expenses of the seminars and workshops.

The main aim of co-ordination is to get the maximum benefit from the programme. To achieve this, co-ordination needs an explicit cost plan for the dissemination of the results at the programme level, as well as a communication plan concerning, among others, newsletters, workshops and publications. These were not mentioned in the co-ordination report.

The co-ordination budget was too small for this Programme. It only covered the part-time salary of the co-ordinator. Considering the limited resources, the co-ordination was very well set up and implemented, but if more money had been allocated to co-ordination, the expectations could also have been higher. With better resources, there would have been more chances to promote collaboration between the projects; for instance, to get the projects together more frequently.

The co-ordinators should have been involved in the projects with significant changes because of the budget cuts. In such situations, the co-ordinators could have mediated communication between the Academy and the projects, and if necessary, arranged renegotiations. There was also a need for regular meetings between the researchers involved and the funding organisations.

A self-evaluation of the projects was organised by the co-ordinators every year in the form of a questionnaire. The status of the annual reports was somewhat unclear, because it was not clearly said by whom the reports were reviewed, or how the Academy would use these reports? Some of the problems would have been picked up earlier, if there had been a systematic follow-up of the annual reports.

Resources should have been allocated to co-ordination for the organising of a concluding session where the achievements would have been evaluated, as well as for the editing of the final report on the results of the Programme. The final report should be published preferably a couple of years after the Programme has been finished, at least if there are still many projects ongoing and further publications to come. The final report could also be published more journalistically in order to get the results of the Programme better known to policymakers.

8 Co-operation within the Programme

Three seminars and several thematic symposia, workshops and meetings were organised within the Programme. The seminars provided a forum for initiating and promoting contacts among the projects as well as a good opportunity for collective planning of joint project activities; in the follow-up seminar the projects presented their research results achieved so far and could also participate in panel discussions. The seminars arranged during the three years attracted a very active participation, but nevertheless the projects did not succeed in developing sufficiently close collaboration with each other. Co-operation within the Programme ought to be facilitated before the final applications were formulated. Obviously collaboration between various disciplines is hard to establish and therefore much more systematic efforts are needed to ensure active and fruitful collaboration.

In case there had been money allocated for special PhD training, it would have been possible for the doctoral students to arrange common sessions, and they could also have managed to bring the projects more together.

9 International co-operation

The projects reported a great number of international contacts with universities and research centres abroad. This expansive international co-operation among the projects is very positive, but we can ask, however, that in how many cases these contacts involved active international co-operation and were not just mere names on papers.

The co-ordinators presented the Programme at several international meetings and congresses to make the Programme better known abroad and to establish contacts with international research programmes.

10 Effectiveness

Ageing research has already established a solid foundation in Finland, and this has now been further strengthened by the Programme. It was encouraging to note that some of the researchers who entered the field of ageing research, were newcomers to whom this Programme offered an opportunity to specialise in ageing research as well. In all 185 people were working in the Programme and the total number of person-months amounted to 1,080. The scope and extend of the activities generated within the Programme was impressive as was also the number of people involved and the person-months devoted.

In general, the projects were productive, but there was, however, a great deal of variation in this respect. The publications produced by the projects included scientific articles and monographs, textbooks, popular articles as well as guidelines for good practice, and the number of publications per project ranged from a project with more than 30 publications in English to a project with only one publication in Finnish. Since many of the projects were still ongoing at the time of the evaluation, the key publications may come out later, and it is therefore too early to say what the final outcome and advantages of the projects will be.

The projects varied greatly in terms of the allocation of money to them and the timing they were set up. Some of the projects had already been working for several years, whereas some were planned and launched specifically for this Programme. Only few projects were completed by the end of the Programme, and especially many of the new and large projects lacked final results at this stage. It is difficult to assess the effectiveness of the Programme as, on the one hand, the funding period proved to be too short for several projects to produce publications and, on the other hand, some of the projects had published a great deal before the Programme actually started.

It would be useful to synthesise the final results and to publish them within a couple of years to present the actual outcome of the Programme. The co-ordinators could perhaps be given two more years to summarise the results of the Programme.

All the projects employed PhD students; in all 38 PhD students were involved in the Programme, and the number of Master thesis students was 20. By the end of the Programme eight PhD degrees were earned. The number of students in the projects was very high, but it remained unclear how many of them were actively and truly engaged in the Programme; a follow-up is therefore needed to find out the concrete advantages of the Programme to students.

The scientific level of the projects may have been affected by the large number of PhD students. Many of the projects relied heavily on the work of PhD students, which cannot be considered reasonable in a research programme like this, even though the students were supervised. The search for new knowledge, in particular, requires an active input of senior researchers.

11 Individual research projects

The Evaluation Group assessed all the 21 projects involved in the Research Programme on the basis of the extended abstracts written by the projects, the publications selected by the project teams and the report compiled by the co-ordinators. Evaluation of individual projects was difficult or even impossible for several reasons: not all the projects were finished and they had hardly any publications; some publications were prepared before the Programme started, and some publications were written in Finnish only, the language that three of the evaluators did not understand at all. For these reasons the projects were evaluated anonymously.

The following scale was used in the evaluation: excellent – satisfactory – unfinished – problematic. The assessment criteria included relevance, competence, formulation of the research question, methodology, performance of the research, and output. According to this scale, only five of all the projects proved to be excellent and nine were rated satisfactory. Over half of the projects (14) were unfinished and three problematic, and a further two were problematic marked with a question mark.

Biological projects seemed to be more often satisfactory than projects focusing on care services, as is seen in the following detailed assessment. The five thematic groups used by the Evaluation Group in the assessment were 'Biological ageing and neuroscience', 'Functional capacity and well-being', 'Ageing, work and economy', 'Everyday life and environment' and 'Elderly, care and services'. Most of the projects in the thematic groups 'Biological ageing and neuroscience' and 'Everyday life and environment' were assessed as excellent or satisfactory. In these two groups only two projects were unfinished and one project was assessed as problematic but with a question mark. Most unsatisfactory projects were in the group 'Elderly, care and services', in which all four projects were unfinished and three of these were also assessed as problematic. Three of five of the projects in the group 'Ageing, work and economy' were unsatisfactory, but there was also one excellent and one satisfactory project in this group. Nonetheless, four projects of five in that group were unfinished. Projects researching in the theme area 'Functional capacity and well-being' were all unfinished but satisfactory.

In general, the scientific quality of the projects varied. Five projects were excellent and the others had problems regarding their research methods, outcome or innovativeness. Some criticism was also expressed of the approaches and lack of focus in the research question and methodology.

The scientific quality was high in projects led by a senior researcher, but varied in projects which relied more on PhD students in conducting the research. All projects that were assessed as excellent had produced international publications except one, whereas the problematic projects had produced none or very few international publications.

According to the joint account of the assessment of the projects, the recommendations for future programmes are:

1) There is a need for stronger input for peer review at the commissioning stage,
2) a period of three years is not a sufficient time for developing the full effectiveness of this kind of approach, especially when PhD students are used as main researchers,
3) more time is needed for co-ordination to ensure that the co-ordinators can work with the projects; for instance, more time for negotiations to promote collaboration between projects.

12 Fulfilment of the Programme aims

The four general aims of the Research Programme on Ageing were:

1) To help the society to deal with the problems and challenges presented by the ageing of the population.
2) To activate innovative basic and applied research into ageing issues.
3) To promote co-operation and dialogue between different disciplines and fields of inquiry within ageing research.
4) To strengthen the involvement of the academic community in ongoing public debate on ageing.

The first aim was fulfilled. The projects produced results that will help the Finnish society to address the problems arisen from the ageing of the population. We may, however, ask how systematic this will be?

The second aim was fulfilled partly, as though there was some innovativeness, this can be seen clearly only later after all the projects have been completed.

The third aim concerning co-operation has fulfilled partly. The Programme has promoted dialogue between different disciplines but more collaboration was, however, expected.

The fourth aim could have been fulfilled better if the findings of the Programme had been compiled and summarised. Now the findings remained concealed and they have to be searched individually. The co-ordinators should have been given more resources to do this. For instance, a booklet where the findings had been compiled would have provided policymakers with an easier access to these findings.

13 Recommendations

I Procedure

The themes of the Programme were wide but relevant. In a small country such as Finland it was rational to accept all disciplines relating to ageing research to apply for participation in the Programme. The selection process of the Programme was also carried out successfully, with the review of the submitted proposals by an international panel.

Some areas of ageing research were missing, such as demography and psychology, research on quality of life, welfare state research, family research and the older people's voice. It is obvious that a wider promotion would have guaranteed a better publicity for the Programme. Older people were largely absent from this Research Programme (except as objects of research); in subsequent programmes innovatory, participatory approaches should be encouraged and older people should be a reference point for co-ordination and projects.

The large budget cuts made after the projects to be included in the Programme were selected, were a great disappointment; in such a situation we recommend that the Academy of Finland considers seriously how to decrease the number of projects. If funding has to be reduced, negotiations should at least be carried on about the changes to be made in each project plan. It would also be useful to renegotiate so that projects close to each other could collaborate and make a joint proposal, but this has to be done before the final selection of the projects. The advised plan was not clear enough and the projects should have expressed their expectations more clearly. Research programmes need a strong corporate identity and there should also be a communication strategy for maximising the impact.

II Policy of the Programme

Two-thirds of the projects were already ongoing before the Programme actually started and only seven projects were new. No policy was adopted for the Programme regarding the proportional share of new and ongoing projects to be selected. This should be considered thoroughly before the selection of the proposals, and the decision should be clearly reported in the Programme documents. When including ongoing projects into the Programme, an accurate description should be given of what part will be the contribution within the Programme. The Academy of Finland should also consider the expectations it has on the funding of ongoing projects.

The fact that so many projects were uncompleted, raised the question about the duration of the Programme and of the Academy's own approach to funding and freedom as the projects now had to decide how to adapt themselves to reductions in financial support. The result of this has been lack of clarity in the objectives of some of the projects and extended timetables. Research programmes should be extended to run a minimum period of four years, and if any cuts are made in the project budgets, detailed renegotiations of the aims and timetable of the research

should be conducted. It is essential to be clear about what is expected from the Academy's funding.

III Co-ordination

The co-ordination was not resourced adequately. The executive co-ordinator worked only 60 per cent of her working time in the Programme and the Programme Director worked in addition to her regular duties. The co-ordinators' work became more difficult because the funding did not cover the seminar costs. The co-ordination is a key function but must be adequately funded with administrative support.

IV Use of PhD students

All projects had PhD students and there were altogether more than 30 PhD students involved in the Programme, but only eight PhD degrees had been earned by the end of the Programme. It would be sensible to separate PhD training from the mainstream research programme. This might entail the funding of a number of studentships with some financial provision for regular contacts between students. In most cases, the PhD programme requires students to take courses in their own field, but a joint class for PhD students from different disciplines would be a good idea for a research programme with a specific focus. This would also facilitate the co-ordination of collaboration across various disciplines.

The number of students involved in a programme should not be over ten. Students cannot be burdened with too much work responsibility in a project that has been included in a research programme.

V Interdisciplinarity

The Programme involved projects from many different disciplines, and though interdisciplinarity was one of the aims of the Programme, this was not fully achieved. Though it is understandable that it was hard to establish active collaboration between the disciplines so different from each other, more efforts should, however, have been devoted to make it work. This requires that a workable strategy be formulated in the pre-protocol.

Conclusion

We hope that the Academy of Finland will continue this investment with further research on ageing. This Programme is only a start, and there is a need to respond to the expectations the Programme has raised as well as to fill in some of the gaps in the portfolio such as interdisciplinary methods; participation of older people; social exclusion and inequalities in quality of life; and the family and intergenerational relations.

Appendix 1

List of the projects

The labour market challenge of workforce ageing
Rita Asplund, The Research Institute of the Finnish Economy

Older women – Invisible road users
Liisa Hakamies-Blomqvist, University of Helsinki

Normal and pathological aging of the brain
Matti Haltia, University of Helsinki

Health effects of postmenopausal hormone therapy
Elina Hemminki, Stakes – National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health

Turku aging male: frequency, diagnosis and treatment of andropause
Ilpo Huhtaniemi, University of Turku

Towards integrated evaluation system for the long-term care of the elderly. Quality of care, functioning of work organisation and cost-effectiveness of care
Unto Häkkinen and Marja Vaarama, Stakes – National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health

Age, work and gender: Management of ageing in the later working life
Raija Julkunen, University of Jyväskylä

The village community as a resource for the aged in the sparsely populated areas in Lapland
Simo Koskinen, University of Lapland

Health, functioning and well-being among ageing employees. Helsinki Health Study
Eero Lahelma, University of Helsinki

Economic effects of ageing in Finland – A dynamic equilibrium analysis
Jukka Lassila, The Research Institute of the Finnish Economy

Encounters in the local welfare-mix for the older people. A study of changing relationships and practices among service providers, professions, decisions makers and older people
Juhani Lehto, University of Tampere

Patina of Time 1973 – 2000. On well-being and longevity in an ageing cohort
Päivi Leino-Arjas, Finnish Institute of Occupational Health

Constructing age, health and competence: Argumentation and Rhetoric in institutional and personal discourse
Anssi Peräkylä, University of Tampere

Life strategies of ageing women: Subsistence alternatives of women past forty, ca 1800 – 2000
Marjatta Rahikainen, University of Helsinki

The process of frailty and disability in older women - Finnish twin study on ageing (FITSA)
Taina Rantanen, University of Jyväskylä

Lifestyle and functional capacity of elderly Finns; secular trends and impact on prognosis
Anssi Reunanen, National Public Health Institute

Towards a successful of age: From a full working career to an active retirement
Risto Rinne, University of Turku

Ageing and independent living – Smart medicines for the physical environment
Tuomo Siitonen, Helsinki University of Technology

Mild cognitive impairment as a predictor of Alzheimer disease. A longitudinal, clinical, neuropsychological, neuroimaging, genetic, health economic study and biological marker
Hilkka Soininen, University of Kuopio

Assessment of and ethical guidelines for enabling technologies in old age. Multimedia in dementia care and Internet and alarm service as examples
Päivi Topo, Stakes – National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health

Future home of elderly people
Anna-Maija Ylimaula, University of Art and Design Helsinki

The Research Programme on Ageing was launched by the Academy of Finland in 1999 and it was carried out in 2000-2002. The programme produced information that helps to deal with problems and challenges presented by the ageing of the population. It also generated information for practical application in various sectors, from housing and employment to health policy planning and treatment methods. Another aim was to strengthen the involvement of the academic community in the ongoing public debate on ageing.

The programme was evaluated in 2003. This report is based on the assessment of the programme by an evaluation group. According to it, the overall impression of the output of the programme is highly positive. The evaluation group also discusses in its report where the programme failed to reach the ideal. These remarks will be useful in the planning of future research programmes.

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