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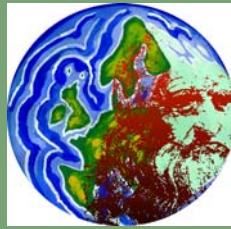
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NEWS Global Ageing Initiative

Fall/Winter 2003-04

ANNOUNCING THE FORTHCOMING MEETING OF THE GLOBAL AGEING INITIATIVE Ancona, Italy, 14-17 June 2004

The Third Working Conference of the Global Ageing Initiative - Ageing Well Research Project is scheduled for 14 – 17 June 2004 in Ancona, Italy. The meeting promises to be significant based on the number of collaborating countries that have collected and analyzed data, as well as produced important findings. By June 2004, the European Study of Ageing Well (ESAW) will have completed their study and held a policy meeting in Lund, Sweden. In addition, several African nations (Togo, Cote d'Ivoire, Cameroon, Kenya, Malawi, and Nigeria) under the leadership of Dr. Paul Nkwiri are organizing themselves to carry out parallel research on ageing well in their respective countries. These countries have signed the GAI collaborative agreement, and are eager to join the research project. There is much to discuss and new directions to strategically plan out. Involvement of Principal Investigators in the meeting will be critical to sustaining the collaborative research project, as well as contributing to strategic directions for the Global Ageing Initiative as a whole.

The overall purposes of this meeting are:

- To present the findings from individual country studies and multi-country data analyses;
- To review successes, problems, and questions regarding research methods and procedures concerning sampling, data collection, instrumentation, and data analysis;
- To explore opportunities for future projects and identify strategic directions;
- To hold discussions regarding dissemination of project findings to policy makers and potential research funding organizations.

The agenda and program for the June meeting is under development. The call for papers on findings deadline is 19 January 2004.

The meeting is being hosted by Dr. Giovanni Lamura and the Gerontological Research Department of the Italian National Research Centres on Ageing (I.N.R.C.A.) with sponsorships being sought from different organizations. Logistics of the meeting are being coordinated by a collaborative effort of Dr. Giovanni Lamura (g.lamura@incra.it) and Dr. Barbara Hawkins (hawkinsb@indiana.edu). Please feel free to contact either Giovanni or Barbara with questions.

A warm welcome is extended to the following
Principal Investigators and their countries:

Dr. Socpa Antoine
Cameroon

Ms. Judith Karogo
Kenya

Mr. Wycliffe Masoo
Malawi

Dr. Paul Nkwiri,
Executive Director
African Population
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Dr. Kofi Nguessan
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Mr. Frank Akpan
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Togo

Research Summary Series No. 1

European Study of Adult Well-Being

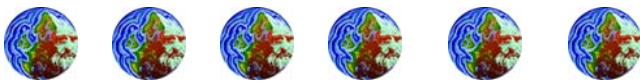
SOCIAL SUPPORT RESOURCES

Writing Team: Vanessa Burholt (UK), G. Clare Wenger (UK), Giovanni Lamura (Italy), Cecilia Paulsson (Sweden), Marieke van der Meer (Netherlands), Dieter Ferring (Luxembourg) and Judith Glueck (Austria).

Abstract:

The research project “Aging Well: A European Study of Adult Well-Being” (ESAW) aimed at building a European socio-cultural model able to identify which main factors, along with personal characteristics and culture, exert a direct causal contribution to the outcome variable *ageing well*. The components included in the study were the following five: physical health and functional status, self resources, life activity, material security, and social support. The project was carried out in 2002-2003 in 6 European countries (Austria, Italy, Luxemburg, The Netherlands, Sweden, and the United Kingdom). It was based on individual interviews administered by means of a structured questionnaire to national samples of 1,800-2,000 non-institutionalized subjects (e.g. not hospitalized nor in long term care facilities), aged 50-90, in each of the involved countries.

ESAW was designed as part of the Global Ageing Initiative, initiated by Indiana University Center on Aging and Aged, under the directorship of Dr. Barbara Hawkins. ESAW was funded by the European Union - QLRT-2001-00280 - and represented a European sub-group of the larger global study.




Social support and participation are important to people at all stages of the life cycle and their contribution to well-being has been well documented. This report presents findings from the ESAW on informal sources of social support available to older Europeans. It provides a cross-country comparison of the characteristics of the sample with regard to satisfaction with relationships, OARS social resources scale, and the Wenger support network typology. Three Support Network Resource


Scales are also compared across the countries. The report considers the effect of country, age, gender, rural or urban residence, ethnicity, household composition, work status, education, and income on the aforementioned social support variables.


ESAW countries are classified according to the comparative levels of participation and engagement in three social spheres, which are family, friends, and community.


Key results:

There were both differences and similarities in social support between the six European countries in the study:

 **Age** was significant when viewing satisfaction with relationships, social resources, availability of family, contact with non-kin, and community participation. However, it was only for social resources and availability of family that the impact of age was similar for all participating countries. The analyses indicated that in all participating countries the oldest respondents had fewer social resources than the younger respondents and fewer available family members.

 **Gender** was a strong indicator of social resources in all countries. Contrary to previous evidence men had greater social resources than women. Gender did not intervene strongly across all countries in the other social relationships (availability of family, non-kin relationships, and community participation) or satisfaction with relationships.

 ESAW identified greater levels of social resources and family availability in the **rural** areas of The Netherlands and Austria than in **urban** areas.

 There were some **ethnic** differences in social support in Sweden. These differences were likely to be due to ethnic-segregation, preferred family forms, filial obligation Settlement patterns. Differences between groups in other

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countries were not observed, although they may exist, as several distinctly different ethnic groups have been categorized under the terms 'non-European' and 'other-European'

Overall, **living arrangements** were very strong indicators of social resources and availability of family in all countries. Older people living alone had the lowest levels of social resources, and those living with members of the younger generation had the highest levels of available family.

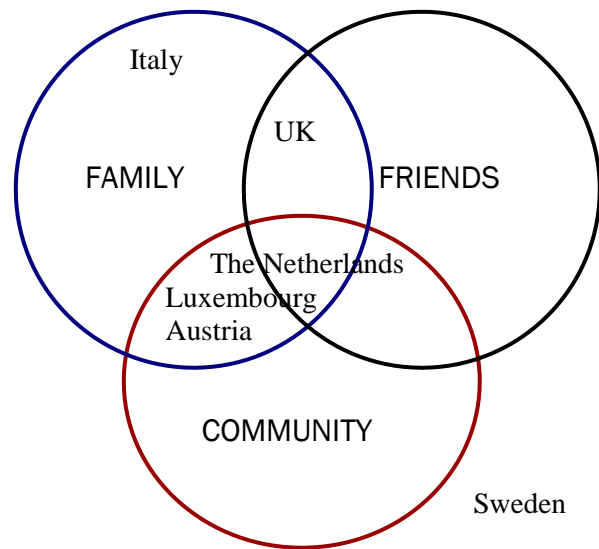
Working Status was a good predictor of social resources and availability of family across the countries participating in the study. Work was associated with increased availability of family but decreased levels of interactions with friends and neighbors.

The associations between **education** and social resources differed between countries. For the total sample, education of primary school level only was associated with lower levels of social resources but higher levels of family availability. In Italy, Austria, and Sweden the lowest level of education was associated with lower levels of non-kin relationships. Education in later life may not be significant if older people lack the resources to socially participate.

Classification of the ESAW countries according to the comparative levels of participation and engagement of three social spheres (family, friends, and community) showed that five of the six countries (with the exception of Sweden) were clustered around the family dimension. Italian elders were family-centered and had lower levels of interaction with friends and community groups than others. In Luxembourg and Austria, multi-generational families were much more common than elsewhere (with the exception of Italy) implied that family relationships were important to those elders. However, both countries having higher levels of community participation than other countries, indicated that the classification of the group should emphasize the salience of the interface between family and community. Older people in the UK were similar to those in The Netherlands, but had lower levels of community participation and were therefore classified as having social relationships that centre around both family and friends. The situation of older people

In The Netherlands and Sweden provided a complete contrast in terms of social relationships. Whereas the social relationships of older people living in The Netherlands spanned all three spheres (family, friends, and community), the older respondents in Sweden were less likely than those in other countries to interact or participate in any of these areas.

Figure 1. Summary of the social relationships for the ESAW countries



Policy implications:

The study highlighted some important crosscutting themes that need to be addressed across Europe. Policy makers should be particularly concerned with:

1. The gendered dimension of social resources, which demonstrated higher levels of informal social resources available to men.
2. The social policy implications of the projected increase in the proportion of older people living alone, who appeared to have had fewer social resources than others.
3. The differences found between the social resources of those working and not working, implied that major changes may occur in people's access to family, friends, and community social resources during the transition to retirement.
4. Income inequities impact social resources both nationally and across Europe.

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1st CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

7th INTERNATIONAL
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**Global Ageing:
Sustaining Development**

Singapore, 5-8 September 2004

Website: www.7ifaconference.com



**Hosted by
Singapore Action Group of Elders
(SAGE)**

UPDATE from The United States

by Alice Foose

The United States has completed and entered 425 surveys representing all regions of the United States. In response to the current need in the United States to understand the interaction between a person's health, lifestyle, and environment, the US team is developing an observational environmental assessment of physical activity with the various communities sampled. The team consists of collaboration between several universities and disciplines. This assessment will establish a nation-wide baseline and will track data on outcomes associated with programs and facilities that are designed to promote physically active life styles and positive health outcomes among adults ages 50 and older. The data gathered will provide a community level assessment that will allow multi-level analysis of communities to supplement the individual level factors gathered by the ageing well, living well questionnaire. Current development and funding is being sought to incorporate this measure into the next phase of testing. The next phase of national data collection is scheduled for late spring, early summer.

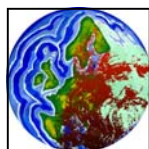
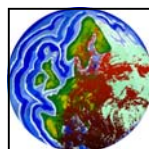
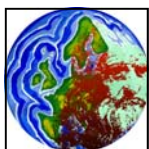
Recent presentations include:

Hawkins, B. A., Foose, A. K., Binkley, A. L., Cheung, S. Y., Gibson, H., Harahousou, Y., Lamura, G., Masberg, B., & Aston-Shaeffer, C. (November 22, 2003). *Leisure and satisfaction with life: A five country comparison*. The 56th Annual Scientific Meeting of the Gerontological Society of America, San Diego, CA.

Hawkins, B. (October 10, 2003). *Global ageing an the study of adult well-being*. Ageing Well: Addressing the Multicultural Challenge. Alma Unit Research on Ageing, Melbourne Victoria, Australia.

Foose, A., Myllykangas, S., & Hawkins, B. (October 17, 2003). *Considerations for cross-national aging research: Development and implementation*. The 10th Measurement and Evaluation Symposium, Urbana, IL.

Ageing Well: Addressing the Multicultural Challenge Melbourne Australia



Australia is composed of a multicultural society with one-third of its older population born overseas. Taking this into consideration, the *Ageing Well* team targeted older adults from the Italian, Vietnamese, and Anglo-Australian communities in Melbourne. The Italian group was included to represent a well-established migrant community. The Vietnamese group represented a recently arrived community. The Anglo-Australian group represented the mainstream population and was included for comparisons.

In total, 404 people participated in the study. The sample included 160 Anglo-Australian, 115 Italian, and 129 Vietnamese men and women between 50 and 89 years of age.

The findings from this study indicated that Anglo-Australian respondents were significantly more satisfied with their ageing than either Italian or Vietnamese participants, with Vietnamese participants more satisfied than Italian participants. Within the Anglo-Australian group, life satisfaction marginally decreased with age. Life satisfaction for the Italian group significantly decreased with age, and this age-related decline was statistically significant for the Italian men. The Vietnamese group showed no significant age-related differences; however, a statistically significant difference was identified with regard to gender. Vietnamese women reported significantly lower levels of life satisfaction than did Vietnamese men. This gender difference was not statistically significant for the younger Vietnamese respondents. Older Vietnamese women reported significantly lower life satisfaction than older Vietnamese men.

Statistical analysis was conducted to identify the predictors of life satisfaction in older age using a range of indicators.

Emotional well-being emerged as the main predictor of ageing well for all men in the sample, irrespective of their ethnic background. *Emotional well-being*, however, did not emerge as a significant predictor for the Anglo-Australian women. For Italian and Vietnamese women, *emotional well-being* emerged as the second most significant predictor. *Health* emerged as the principal predictor of ageing well among Italian and Anglo-Australian women. Although *health* did not emerge for Vietnamese women, it was the second significant predictor of ageing well among Italian men. *Productivity* emerged as the major predictor of ageing well for Vietnamese women. *Intimacy* emerged as the third significant predictor of ageing well among Anglo-Australian men. *Place in the community* emerged as the third significant predictor among Anglo-Australian women.

Statistical analysis was also conducted to identify the predictors of *ageing well* as measured by the *Ageing Well Ladder* – a self-assessment scale completed by each respondent. Satisfaction with leisure, satisfaction with social relationships, and material security emerged as the most significant predictors among the Anglo-Australian respondents. *Material security* and *mental health* were the best predictors for the Italian respondents; whereas, mental and physical health emerged as the best predictors among the Vietnamese respondents.

In terms of gender differences, marital status positively contributed to well-being in older age for the Anglo-Australian men, but not for the Anglo-Australian women. Leisure satisfaction contributed to *ageing well* among Italian men, but not Italian women. Within the Vietnamese group, material security contributed to *ageing well* among security contributed to *ageing well* among women, but not among men.

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Functional health status was identified with regard to the number of serious conditions, the number of medications, physical disabilities, eyesight, hearing, consumption of alcohol, medical treatment, and frequency of physical activity. Within the Anglo-Australian group, women reported marginally better functional health than did men, with functional health deteriorating significantly with age for Anglo-Australian men while marginally improving for Anglo-Australian women. Within the younger group, Anglo-Australian men reported better physical health than Anglo-Australian women. Within the Italian group, functional health deteriorated with age among both men and women, and this age-related deterioration was statistically significant for the Italian men. Italian men, however, reported better physical health than did Italian women regardless of age. Within the Vietnamese group, functional health deteriorated with age more rapidly for women than among men.

At present, preparations have commenced for phase II of the Australian study. Funding is being sought to expand the number of Anglo-Australian participants as well as to include older adults from the Greek and Maltese communities in Melbourne. It is envisaged that the proposed second phase of the *ageing well* study will allow for comparisons not only between culturally diverse groups within Australia but also between older adults who migrated to Australia and those who remained in their countries of origins.

Ageing Well Symposium Team:
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Dr. A. Brinkley
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Mr. W. Kurowski
Faculty of Human Development

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AURA
Alma Unit for Research on Aging

REPORTS from ESAW

By Clare Wenger

June Ancona Italy

The European Study of Adult Well-Being (ESAW) held its third management meeting in Ancona, Italy, in June. Ancona is on the Adriatic Coast and everyone who attended the meeting, especially those from northern Europe, enjoyed the heat and the swimming. We worked very hard, made a lot of progress, and enjoyed group dinners every evening. Everyone got along with one another very well and everyone delivered on time. We must be a fairly unique research group in that regard.

The study involved Austria, Italy, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom. It was co-ordinated by Clare Wenger in the UK. The main focus of this meeting was discussion of the comparative reports, which had been written for each domain in the study: physical health and functional status, material security, life activities, self resources (formerly mental efficacy), social support resources, and contextual and cultural differences between the ESAW countries. Some interesting differences between countries emerged including some unpredicted findings. For example, levels of satisfaction did not always match levels of resources, and those doing best were often less satisfied than those doing less well. We hope that the psychologists will be able to make sense of this! The edited versions of these analyses were completed by mid-September. A Highlight Summary Series was also produced giving summaries for each report and the final report on the model.

Now that we have started analysing our data, there has been a surge of enthusiasm in the group. The ESAW partnership looks forward to the GAI meeting planned for 2004. In the interim, we will be contacting two other European countries involved in the GAI to see whether they would be interested in some co-analyses and writing

Symposia based on the ESAW have been presented at the International Congress of Anthropological and Enological Sciences in Florence, on 7 June, and at the European Congress of Psychology in Vienna, on 9 June. Both these symposia were very well received. Wenger also spoke about ESAW at the symposium on Ageing Well: the Multicultural Challenge held in Melbourne, Australia, 9-10 October, 2003.

NOVEMBER 2003

The European Study of Adult Well-Being, funded by the European Commission for two years from 1 January 2002 to 31 December 2003, has had a busy and successful year. Publication of the findings in scholarly journals and books will coincide with the completion of the study!

During 2003 we held three management meetings. The first occurred outside Amsterdam in January, and the second was held in Ancona, Italy, in June. At these meetings the teams from all the partner countries met together to look at progress on the project, to make sure that we were all doing the same thing, and to discuss the next phase of the work. The final meeting of this project took place in Lund, Sweden, 25-28 November. This meeting focused on the effort of ensuring that we had fulfilled all the terms of our contract with the Commission, discussed the responsibilities of the partners for information for the final report, and more importantly, discussed how we would liaise with one another on publication and possible collaborations in the future. In addition, we made plans for the GAI meeting to be held in Ancona next June.

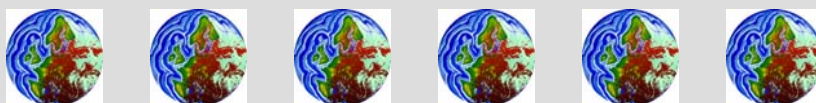
Doing cross-national research is always complex and demands a lot of work to ensure that the collaboration progresses well. In the ESAW, although there were only 6 countries involved, the research used 13 languages. Luxembourg, for instance, has three official languages. In the United Kingdom the sample was drawn to reflect the three internal nationalities – English, Scottish, and Welsh. In addition to English and Welsh, which are recognised as the official languages in Wales, interviewers in England also needed Urdu, Gujarati, Punjabi and Sylheti to make sure that recent immigrants from South Asia were included. Ensuring that all the languages were asking exactly the same questions was a demanding process.


The key to the success of cross-national research is choosing your partners wisely. We were careful to select experienced researchers with whom we or close colleagues had worked before, whose work we knew, who we felt confident would meet deadlines, and work well in a team. This strategy worked; we had a wonderful team of people who worked very well together, met deadlines, collaborated constructively, and became friends over the two years. Teams in all the countries included both experienced and younger researchers and, due in large part to the personalities of the principal investigators, we were able to work with hardly any hierarchy with everyone having a vital part to play. Several people used the study as work for their PhDs. We are hoping that those involved within this established team will be able to work together again on allied topics in the future.

During the year, writing teams made up of at least one person from each country were responsible for writing comparative reports on each of the life domains. A modeling sub-committee was established with at least one member from each country. The European model for ageing well was presented at an invited Seminar of policy-makers in Lund 27-28 November. Presentations based on each of the comparative reports were also presented at this meeting and a series of Research Highlights were circulated. These comparative reports were available to members of GAI as soon as they had been agreed upon by the funding agency.

Papers were presented at a number of meetings during the year by various members of the group in Australia, Austria, Italy, The Netherlands, the UK and elsewhere, and several symposia are planned for various conferences in 2004. In the next GAI Newsletter we will be able to give a full list of presentations and, perhaps by then, publications.

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GLOBAL AGEING INITIATIVE

Setting standards for cross-cultural ageing well systems
and for healthy older people in the 21st century.