ENSURING QUALITY OF LIFE AT ALL AGES

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ENSURING QUALITY OF LIFE AT ALL AGES

- Background
- Quality of Life
- Quality of Life in Old Age
- Policy Challenges
- Policy Directions
BACKGROUND

- A life course perspective on well-being/quality of life (the society for all ages)
- The need for a combination of preventative and remedial actions
- A development perspective
Scope of non communicable diseases prevention: a life course approach

Development of NCD:

- Fetal life: SES; maternal nutritional status; birth weight
- Infancy and childhood: SES; diseases; growth rate
- Adolescence: Obesity; lack of PA; smoking
- Adult life: Established adult; Behavioural/biological risk factors

Age:

- SES: socioeconomic status
- PA: Physical activity

Source: Aboderin et al., 2002, p.17
QUALITY OF LIFE

- Dimensions and Scope
  - Amorphous, multi-dimensional, complex
  - Health often used as a proxy
  - Major focus of scientific research BUT precarious relationship between research and actual quality of life
  - Important driver of policy (in EU)
MULTI-DIMENSIONAL NATURE OF QoL

Physical

Psychological

Social/Economic

Spatial

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MODELS OF QUALITY OF LIFE

- Objective social indicators
- Satisfaction of human needs
- Subjective social indicators
- Societal networks/social capital
- Ecological/environmental resources
- Health and functioning
- Psychological competence
- Hermeneutic approaches
UNDERSTANDING QoL IN OLD AGE

• Dynamic, multi-faceted, complex concept
• QoL in old age reflects life course and situational factors
• Similarities with other age groups, especially mid-life
• Sources of QoL differ between older people
• Subjective self-assessments more powerful than 'objective' factors
SCIENTIFIC CONSENSUS ON QoL IN OLD AGE

- Psychological variables
- Health and functional status
- Social relations, support and activity
- Economic security
- Environmental conditions
- Leisure activities and mobility
OLDER PEOPLE'S PERSPECTIVES ON QoL

FOUNDATIONS OF A GOOD QoL IN OLD AGE

- Having good social relationships with family, friends and neighbours
- Having good health and functional ability
- Living in a good home and neighbourhood
- Having a positive outlook and psychological well-being
- Having adequate income
- Maintaining independence and control over one's life

OLDER PEOPLE'S PERSPECTIVES ON QoL

MAXIMISING QoL

- Maintaining health and independence, social activities and relationships
- Neighbourly and safe areas
- Local amenities and services
- Participation
- Transport
- Finance

FROM QUALITY OF LIFE TO SOCIAL QUALITY

- Limitations of quality of life as a policy focus: open-ended, individualistic and atheoretical
- Social quality: theoretically derived, a combination of individual and social elements and bounded by conditional factors
SOCIAL QUALITY

Definition:

The extent to which people are able to participate in the social, economic and cultural life of their communities under conditions which enhance their well-being and individual potential

Beck et al, 1997
SOCIAL QUALITY: CONDITIONAL FACTORS

- Societal Development
  - Socio-economic Security
  - Social Security
  - Societal Cohesion

- Conditions for Social Quality
  - Systems
  - Institutions
  - Organizations
  - Social Inclusion

- Communities
  - Families
  - Groups
  - Social Empowerment

- Biographical Development

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POLICY CHALLENGES

1. Urgent remedial action e.g. poverty/extreme social exclusion, homelessness, elder abuse
2. Dynamic nature of ageing
3. Globalisation
4. Adopting a life course perspective emphasising prevention
5. Joining-up various policy dimensions
6. Combining different actions: mainstreaming, specific, capacity building

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POLICY CHALLENGES

7. Sustaining formal and informal resources
8. Empowering older people
9. Recognising diversity e.g. needs, aspirations, cultures, risks
10. Maintaining generational solidarity
POLICY DIRECTIONS

- Challenges vary between regions and countries (EU cf EECCA)
- A comprehensive strategy (e.g. active ageing, the promotion of social quality) is necessary to:
  - combine preventative and remedial actions
  - reflect a society for all ages approach
  - integrate economic and social policies
  - join-up all of the relevant actors
  - ingrain the principle of participation
CHALLENGES IN CEE

- Disillusionment among older people
- Extreme exclusion/early exclusion
- Sense of loss and bereavement
- Threatened personal security
- Lack of appreciation/blaming culture
- Rural/urban divide
- Paucity of information
EXAMPLE 1: ACTIVE AGEING

- Active ageing should be a coordinated strategy to maximise participation and well-being as people age. It should operate at the individual (lifestyle), organisational (management) and societal (policy) levels and at all stages of the life course.
THE CYCLE OF WELL-BEING

The positive effects on health of positive well-being have been found to be even larger than the effects from body mass, smoking and exercise.

Increased availability, confidence and opportunities

Increased personal health and well-being and social networks

Increased participation

ODPM (2006)
PRINCIPLES OF ACTIVE AGEING

- ‘Activity’ is everything that contributes to well-being
- All older people
- A preventative concept: across the lifecourse
- Intergenerational
- Rights and obligations
- Participative and empowering
- Respect for cultural diversity
KEY ELEMENTS OF A STRATEGY FOR ACTIVE AGEING

- Root out ageism
- Remove age barriers
- Develop active age management
- Flexible retirement
- Active civic life including volunteering
- Combat social exclusion
- Public health across the lifecourse
- Redistribute resources from cure to prevention
- Target the geriatric giants
- Increase social care
- Establish activity programmes in care homes
- Social quality as the goal of social protection systems
EXAMPLE 2: SOCIAL QUALITY

- Policies to promote:
  - Socio-economic security
e.g. economic security, health and functioning, environmental security
  - Social inclusion e.g. health and mental well-being, mobility, crime control/safety, volunteering, neighbourhood activities, diversity, gateway concept
  - Social cohesion e.g. intergenerational solidarity, anti-age discrimination
  - Social empowerment e.g. advice centres, supportive/enabling social care, participative governance.
THE UK'S SURE START APPROACH

A Sure Start to later life - improving participation and prevention

Lifelong learning

Volunteering

Advocacy and specialist advice

Transport

Social activities

Health

Social care

Housing

Safety and environment

Finance and benefits

Information

Single Accessible Gateway to Services

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EMPOWERING OLDER PEOPLE

- **PRINCIPLES:**
  - Listening to them
  - Building on their capacity and commitment
  - Creating partnerships based on honesty/transparency
  - Placing older people at the centre of services
  - Involving them in management/governance
ENSURING QoL AT ALL AGES

- MEANS:
  - A combination of individual and collective actions with policy supports
  - A preventative life course perspective e.g. active ageing
  - Maximising social quality for all ages (security, inclusion, cohesion, empowerment)
  - Spreading risks as widely as possible
  - Enlarging individual/group participation and control