

Symposium - The Ageing Process as the Main Underlying Cause of Non-Communicable Diseases: Science and Policy

The degenerative ageing process lies at the basis of most processes of chronic pathogenesis leading to the development of such non-communicable diseases as diabetes, cancers, heart disease, chronic lung disease and neurodegenerative diseases. The relation between non-communicable diseases, disability and senescence is exacerbated by the fact that the world population is rapidly ageing. This will globally enhance the impact of the biological aging process on the prevalence of non-communicable disease patterns.

In view of these facts, a promising and cost-effective strategy to combat severe non-communicable diseases may be to give a greater focus of health research from attempting to address individual diseases and symptoms to addressing their underlying root cause and main risk factor - the degenerative process of ageing. A large number of experimental studies in animal models demonstrate the feasibility of such an approach. Yet, its wide medical application will first require the comprehensive strategic analysis and forecast of various research and development approaches to increasing the healthspan and, based on this analysis and forecast, the massive concerted shift of emphasis in health research and public policy.