

## **PS1.034**

### **Healthy ageing the truth behind the curtain**

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**Background & Aim:** There's a concept emerging around the world and all over Europe: "healthy ageing". The World Health Organization and the European Union consider of great importance all measures, policies and practices that contribute to healthy ageing. In fact, many European countries have developed programs that aim to improve the health and well being of older people. As elderly is a result of human longevity and ageing a social phenomenon of contemporary western societies, with the increasing of average life expectancy is important to raise public awareness of the issue.

**Methods:** Literature review, were selected articles of the main medical databases in English and Portuguese, Pubmed/Medline, using MeSH terms "healthy ageing".

**Results:** Healthy ageing depends on the balance between the natural decline of the various individual, mental and physical abilities and the achievement of objectives that are desired. There are three fundamental principles such as autonomy, learning throughout life and getting active. It's important to promote the right to self-determination while maintaining dignity, integrity and freedom of choice, as well as promoting the maintenance of cognitive abilities. The disease prevention, delaying its onset or reducing its severity is the key component of healthy ageing. In Portugal, there's example of two programs "Ageing and Violence" that identify situations of violence among older people and "GERIA - geriatric study on health effects of air quality in elderly care centers" that improve the health of older persons living in elderly care centres.

**Conclusion:** In a couple of years one-third of Europe's population will be aged 60 and over, and there will be an increase in the number of people aged 80 and older. Encouraging good health and active societal contribution among the older will be crucial in develop strategies to meet this goal. The challenge is not how to live more, but how to live better.