HEALTH AND AGING IN ALL POLICIES: EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGEs

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Population according to age (1-year) and gender 31.12.2018

Statistics Finland / Population structure
CHANGING POPULATION-LEVEL RISK - GEOFFREY ROSE’S PREVENTION THEORY

Source for picture: https://upstreamthinking.wordpress.com/geoffrey-roses-prevention-theory/
AGING IN ALL POLICIES

- Mobility and public transport for physical activity
  - Ensuring functional public transport, walking distance services

- Sports, leisure and cultural activities
  - Discounts and pensioner group activities
  - Pensioners provide also crucial support to theatres and cultural life

- Ensuring healthy diets
  - Understanding needs and priorities for healthy eating for aging

- Social policies and support
  - Ensuring sufficient pension for independent life, enabling social support in remote areas

- Buildings fit for aging
  - New thinking to mix generations and in new purpose built houses
THE CHALLENGE OF DEMENTIA

Figure 6. Age-standardised dementia mortality (incl. Alzheimer’s disease) 1971 to 2017
Dementia mortality of Finnish men and women (incl. Alzheimer's disease) was the highest in EU countries relative to the population in 2015. Since 2005 deaths from pneumonia have taken into consideration dementia as an underlying cause of death.

Dementia mortality has developed in a similar fashion for both men and women, but as women live longer women form majority of deaths due to dementia.
Finnish research suggests that dementia could be delayed by dietary and life-style interventions (Finger study - THL) based on trials with multi-intervention focus vs. health advice only.

Supported by Lancet Commission emphasis of up to 30% of Alzheimer disease cases preventable by modifying 7 factors (diabetes, mid-life hypertension and obesity, physical inactivity, smoking, low education and depression).

Lancet commission support also to social engagement and prevention of isolation.
ENABLING ACTIVE SOCIAL LIFE WHERE PEOPLE WISH TO LIVE

• How to ensure that homecare is adequate and serves the purpose
• How to mix responsibilities for caring of elderly parents with working longer?
• How to ensure sufficient services to remote areas?
• How to cope with care of demanding dementia patients?
ELDERLY CARE

- Finnish crisis in elderly care provision and large commercial providers of care in 2018-2019
- Social and health care reform vs. constitutional obligations
- Systemic problems in care provided by large commercially driven provider chains
- Insufficient spending on elderly care in comparison to other Nordic countries

Picture: Parliament constitutional committee statement on health and social care reform
CHALLENGE FOR HIAP: HOW TO ENSURE ECONOMIC POLICIES FIT FOR AGING

- Necessity to prepare for increased care needs and fragility even with healthy aging
- HIAP can postpone, but will not avoid a period of fragility and need for care
- Challenge of change in family structure: loneliness and lack of support
- Challenge for families in work with children, unpaid costs of caring - women’s work too often taken as granted
THANK YOU

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