



## Editorial

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## EDITORIAL

The world is ageing. During the first half of this century, the proportion of people aged 60 and over will double, and the number will increase from 605 million to 2 billion. The very old people (aged 80+) will quadruple during the same period, as well as the number of people who are no longer able to look after themselves (1). *Quadruple!* Are we prepared for this?

The Physiotherapy Evidence Database, PEDro, is providing over 28,000 scientific articles in the field of physiotherapy. PEDro celebrated its 15th anniversary during October 2014 and identified the 15 most important randomized, controlled trials in physiotherapy ever published. Half of the studies were about pain management, which is one of the most common reasons for contacting a physiotherapist. However, two of the studies were about stroke rehabilitation and one about high-intensity functional exercise for older people in residential care facilities (2). Congratulations to PEDro, all designated authors and, most important, the frail group of older people who are highlighted in this study. This acknowledgement is very pleasing and gives hope for the future of ageing research.

Ageing is a complex process and no other group of people is as heterogeneous as older people. It is a group within at least a 40-year range in chronological age, but with an even wider range in biological and psychological age. Comorbidity as well as cognitive, physiological and functional decline complicates the situation for both the individual as well as prerequisites for rehabilitation and care (3). It is therefore of outmost importance to have a wide biopsychosocial perspective when working with this group. Also, to individualize the rehabilitation and care for older people through tailored interventions is central when reaching for global active ageing.

Active ageing is defined as maintaining autonomy and independence in older people. Many older, especially very old, people lose their ability to live

independently because of limited mobility, frailty, or other physical or mental health problems (1). Physiotherapists play an important role in preventing and/or delaying functional decline in old age through individually tailored interventions including physical activity as means to give older people the chance to do what they want for as long as they can (4).

Research on ageing has come far during the last few decades. But as scientists, we should never relax, because there are still many challenges ahead of us – both in meeting the needs of the expanded aged population and continuing to produce high quality research.

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