

New study to assess 3 simple, cost-effective strategies to promote healthy aging

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In Europe, the number of seniors aged 70 and over will increase by 40% in the next 20 years, while those aged 80 and over will more than double. Health authorities and the medical community expect a corresponding increase in the number of people suffering costly and debilitating age-related chronic diseases such as osteoporosis, arthritis, heart and lung diseases and dementia. The significant increase in the numbers of people suffering age-related chronic diseases is expected to have serious social and health-economic repercussions across Europe – unless effective prevention strategies are put in place.

A new international study announced today by the University of Zurich hopes to provide definitive evidence that three effective, affordable and safe measures can be taken to significantly reduce the burden of [chronic diseases](#) in the elderly. The DO-HEALTH study (VitaminD3-Omega3-Home Exercise-Healthy Ageing and Longevity Trial) will be Europe's largest healthy ageing study. It expects to provide solid evidence for the efficacy and safety of three simple preventive interventions: vitamin D, omega-3 fatty acids and a simple home exercise programme.

Professor Heike Bischoff-Ferrari, Director of the Centre on Aging and Mobility of Zurich University and DO-HEALTH Principal Investigator said "Various studies have shown that vitamin D and simple targeted exercise programmes can significantly improve functional mobility and reduce falls and fractures in [seniors](#), even by up to 30%. As well Omega 3 provides significant health benefits to seniors. DO-HEALTH hopes to

provide definitive evidence that the three interventions, alone or combined, are able to reduce the number of fractures, the functional and cognitive decline, the risk of hypertension and the risk of infections in the senior population".

Additionally, the study will measure several other important parameters, such as the severity of knee pain in patients with osteoarthritis, the ability to carry out daily life activities and the participants' general quality of life.

DO-HEALTH will start recruiting seniors in five European countries as of May 2012 and will observe more than 2,000 healthy-at-start community-dwelling seniors, aged 70 and older, for three years. Participants' follow-up will be in-person and in quarterly intervals, including yearly clinical visits. Participants will be recruited at the University of Zurich, Basel, Geneva, Toulouse, Innsbruck, Nuremberg, Coimbra and the Charité in Berlin.

Professor René Rizzoli, Board Member of the International [Osteoporosis Foundation](#) and Head of the Division of Bone Diseases, Department of Medical Specialties, Geneva University Hospitals and Faculty of Medicine, stated, "The findings of this important new study may provide the critical evidence that will result in the implementation of simple, cost-effective strategies and medical recommendations to help tackle the growing burden of chronic diseases in Europe's senior population. [Health authorities](#) must do all they can to ensure that senior citizens remain physically independent and active members of the community".

More information: [europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesA...
ge=EN&guiLanguage=en](http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=EN&guiLanguage=en)

Provided by International Osteoporosis Foundation

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