

Lilly

Answers That Matter.



Co-ordinating ageing research in the UK

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EPSRC

Engineering and Physical Sciences
Research Council



Which Research Councils are most concerned with older people and ageing research?

- MRC
 - Medical Research Council?
- ESRC
 - Economic and Social Research Council?
- BBSRC
 - Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council?
- EPSRC
 - Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council?
- AHRC
 - Arts and Humanities Research Council?

Since 1998 ageing research has been making a difference

- **Design and Engineering Research**
 - assisting the professions - design, health, social services
 - supporting those who commission buildings, transport systems and products
 - aiding policy development – housing, transport, care....
 - improving regulations, standards and expectations
- **Biological Research**
 - pioneering a new understanding of ageing processes
 - from new insights to new diagnoses
 - new practices for medical and health professionals – clinicians to physiotherapists
 - dramatic implications for healthy living and longevity

Touchstones for success

- Bottom-up not Top-down
 - ageing is a new area for research
 - the innovators are those at the leading edge of science
 - policy driven approaches fail to spot the opportunities for matching science and the needs of an ageing society
- Ageing research thrives
 - when older people, practitioners from all walks of life and researchers get together
 - on grassroots “bottom up” enthusiasm of researchers and their supporters to make a difference to the quality of life of older people.
- Unfortunately those involved with formulating science policy
 - neither close to science nor close to older people

A SPARC is born

- Disappointed by the slow progress of top-down approach stifling research
 - As recently confirmed by House of Lords findings
- Supported by many research users
 - professionals, charities, older people as well as researchers
- Research councils were approached to support a bottom-up community-led initiative
 - EPSRC and BBSRC responded very positively

A new beginning for ageing research

SPARC

Strategic Promotion of Ageing
Research Capacity

Commenced early 2005

For the research community and its supporters in health, social and housing services, charities, industry, voluntary agencies, local and central government, and amongst older and disabled people.....

SPARC – three themes

- Networking through:
 - workshops
 - international activities
- Advocacy
- Capacity Building through:
 - small awards

Workshops

Regular workshops in collaboration with others

- ◆ 8 a year for 3 years (this is the 18th!)
- ◆ up and down the country, some international
- ◆ hosted by the community
 - ◆ universities, firms, professional bodies, charities
- ◆ focused on
 - ◆ biology, design & engineering,
 - ◆ older people's needs, issues & problems

A platform for all-comers

- ◆ work of leading researchers on ageing
- ◆ research of newcomers
- ◆ perspectives of policy makers, practitioners and intermediaries
- ◆ experiences of end users – older people

Forthcoming workshops

- **For all-comers**
 - **Keeping Active and Getting Out and About**
 - Joint workshop with LARCI (Local Authority Research Council Initiative)
 - 8th February 2007, Birmingham
 - **Ageing Research and Occupational Therapy**
 - Joint workshop with the College of Occupational Therapists
 - 20th March 2007, London
 - **Older People and the Internet**
 - Spring 2007 (tba), British Computer Society and Middlesex University
 - **Radical Chemistry and Biology**
 - 30th March 2007
 - University of Glasgow
 - **Others to follow** - we will keep you posted by email/web
- **For the research community**
 - **Award Holder's Workshop**
 - 11th January 2007, University of Reading
 - **Funding Opportunities and FP7**
 - 12th February 2007, University of Birmingham
- **A SPARC Supported Workshop**
 - ***Our Ageing Society: The Challenges of Appropriate, Supportive Technology,***
 - *Institution of Engineering and Technology,*
 - *31 January 2007, Savoy Place, London.*

Advocacy

- Making the case that ageing research can and is making a difference
 - to improving the quality of life of older people
 - to the work of professionals who care for and provide services to older people
 - benefiting the public purse
- Lobbying
 - the media & policy makers
 - user representatives & intermediaries
 - internationally
- Can build on a good track record
 - Ministers and MPs do listen!
 - Margaret Hodge, Lord Sainsbury, Lord Hunt, Lord Sutherland...
 - Recently much interaction with the Cabinet Office, DCLG and DWP

Capacity building awards

- Small awards scheme for newcomers to ageing research
- 185 proposals total value £5.7m were considered in Summer 2005 & Spring 2006
- **34 were funded total value £1.2m**
 - for superior scientific excellence and capacity building
 - for titles see flyer in your joining pack, for more information www.sparc.ac.uk
 - several award holders or members of their teams are here today

The 34 award holders



The work we support in Cognition

- **SPARC**

- **Biomarkers for cognitive ageing in the human brain**
 - *Professor Zoe Kourtzi, Birmingham*
- **Neural underpinnings of word-finding problems across the life span**
 - *Professor Lorraine Tyler, Cambridge*
- **What makes synthetic speech difficult for older people to understand?**
 - *Dr Maria Klara Wolters, Edinburgh*
- ***Plus several on Oxidative Stress, Mechanisms of Ageing, Chemistry of Ageing***

- **EQUAL**

- **Dementia**
 - **Reminiscence and conversation support** *Dundee & St Andrews*
 - **Devices for use in a smart house** *Bath*
 - **Design of domestic environments** *Liverpool, Bath & Sheffield*
 - **Design of care homes** *Loughborough & Sheffield*
 - **Configuration and design in caring environments** *University College London & Sheffield*
 - **Dementia friendly neighbourhood design** *Oxford Brookes*
- **Stroke**
 - **Assessment and rehabilitation of cognitive-motor skills** *Reading*
 - **Smart rehabilitation: technological applications for use in the home** *Sheffield Hallam, Ulster, Essex & Bath*
- **Other**
 - **Input devices for virtual environments for use by people with learning disabilities** *Nottingham*

A propitious time for SPARC

- Heightened awareness
 - of the challenges of ageing and need for new ways forward
- Exciting contributions
 - of engineering and biological research to meeting these challenges
- House of Lords Inquiry - Scientific Aspects of Ageing Research
 - damned practically every government organisation concerned with older people's issues for lacking interest and poor organisation, let alone any gumption
 - but SPARC was excepted – the bright spot

New opportunities for research -

- Current and Recent examples from EPSRC
 - New Dynamics of Ageing (EPSRC, ESRC, BBSRC, MRC, AHRC)
 - Future Intelligent Transport Systems (EPSRC, DTI)
 - SandPits – for example. Taking Care to the Patient (EPSRC)
 - Sustainable Urban Environments (EPSRC and others)
 - Challenging Engineering Interfaces (EPSRC)
 - More to follow
 - BBSRC, AHRC also

Ageing, Dementia & Cognitive Impairment – new perspectives in research, practice & caring

- No spin, no promises of untold riches for researchers, firms or older people
- An honest reflection of the excitement and commitment to improving quality of life of older people through research and better practice - of the possibilities which science and good practice can offer
- There is a lot more going on than we can showcase
 - This is just an example

TVLSN & Eli Lilly

*Presenters
and Chairmen
& today's participants*

**Thanks a million for taking an
interest in older people**

**and thanks also to
EPSRC & BBSRC**