

*1st*  
**WORLD**  
CONGRESS



19 – 22 March, 2012  
**ON HEALTHY AGEING**

---

[www.healthyageingcongress.org](http://www.healthyageingcongress.org)

Organised by:



Malaysian Healthy Ageing Society

Co-Sponsored:



World Health  
Organization

# **“Ageing well”**

*A trans-disciplinary study  
on representation of ageing across cultures*

**Sylvie Sanchez**

Nathalie Martin and Alexandre Voirin,  
Nestlé Research Center, Switzerland

**"Evolution: Holistic Ageing in an Age of Change"**  
19th-22nd March 2012, Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre,  
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia



- Capture **the cultural** and the **socio-psychological** factors that impact the **representations of ageing**
  - along the lifespan
  - among the 45-75 years old people
  - across cultures
- Understand **how lay people characterize the ageing and the elderly**
- Explore **individual's relation to food** in order to understand how it could play a role in a **pro-active relation to ageing (prevention)**

### Scientific fields

- Cultural & Social Anthropology:  
24 IDI, 3h/ country
- Social-Psychology:  
350 Q / country

### Target

- Healthy & Autonomous
- Age: 45-75yo,
- Sex: Male/Female
- Job: Active, Unemployed, Retired
- Household size: Alone/Family
- Income: low, medium, medium high





**What is an elderly person?  
What does ageing refer to?**



**Cultural**



**Biological**



## Shared statement

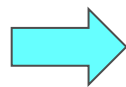
*“Even if not young anymore, I feel at least 10 years younger than my peers!” (<45-75), (...) “and I feel very much younger than the previous generation seemed at my age!”*



## Accepted representation

- Previous generation is seen as a counter model
- Activity & Ability to still enjoy life = “Ageing Well”
- Warning: the “Ageing Well” idea
  - Reaches beyond a good health state
  - Doesn’t refer to youth

How does age impact the body functioning	
GAIN	LOSS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Weight</li><li>- Cholesterol, Diabetes, Blood pressure</li><li>- Fatigue</li><li>- Fragility</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Hair, teeth, cells (wrinkles)</li><li>- Mobility (Breath/respiratory, Digestive system, skeleton)</li><li>- Memory (cells)</li><li>- Sleep quantity vs quality</li></ul>

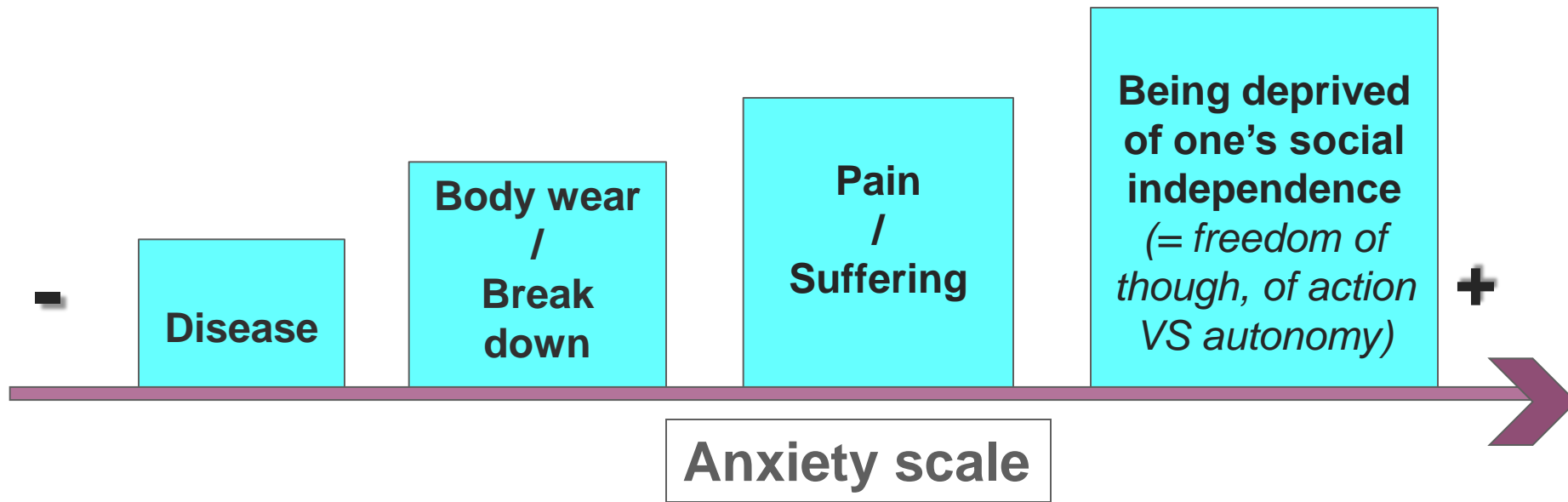


**Find a new equilibrium**

**VS**

**Re-gain what is lost or Recover youth attributes**

# Sources of anxiety for lay people : a mix of culture and of biology



→ The lay ranking of the drivers of anxiety differs from what experts consider when building a prevention program:

- Disease is not the key driver
- *Ageing Well* doesn't refer first and foremost to health but to a socio-psychological criteria that is *social independence*





## How do foods and food practices support the expectation of *Ageing well*?

Health?

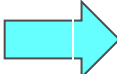
Wellbeing?



- **Elderly think that food products/diet are of little help because they consider that genetics are the biggest influence when it comes to the way we age**
- **Knowing that, they of course try to do not add additional stress to existing weakness through their diet by:**
  - Monitoring of salt, sugar, fat
  - Taking supplements (Ca, Mg, Multi-vitamins)
  - Favouring natural food

## **BUT**

- **Food products themselves aren't that important. For lay people, the corner stone is time:**
  - Being free with one's own daily schedule
  - This is what they consider to be "Ageing Well"

 **For elderly, Food and relation to food are only a medium  
– interchangeable with other activities –  
not a end in itself**

- **When promoting *Ageing Well* in a public health campaign, whatever the domain - *food, health, other* - we shouldn't focus on health benefit only but take into account the lay definition of *Ageing Well*:**
  - **Ability to enjoy life**
  - **Activity**
  - **Social independence**
- **It's not that the role of healthy foods isn't important for people in the *Ageing Well* expectation but they consider that the excesses (food/beverages) done in the past provoked such damages in the body that any food solution proposed when getting older will be of no help for supporting the ageing on going process**
  - **Therefore, explaining them that healthy foods / diet could still support their health and contribute to the building of the *Ageing Well* aim should engage them to welcome better any nutritional advice**



**Thank you for your attention**

