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supporting forward looking decision making

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Active and Healthy Ageing

A Long-Term View up to 2050



Workshop 31.01.2011

Dr. Miriam Leis

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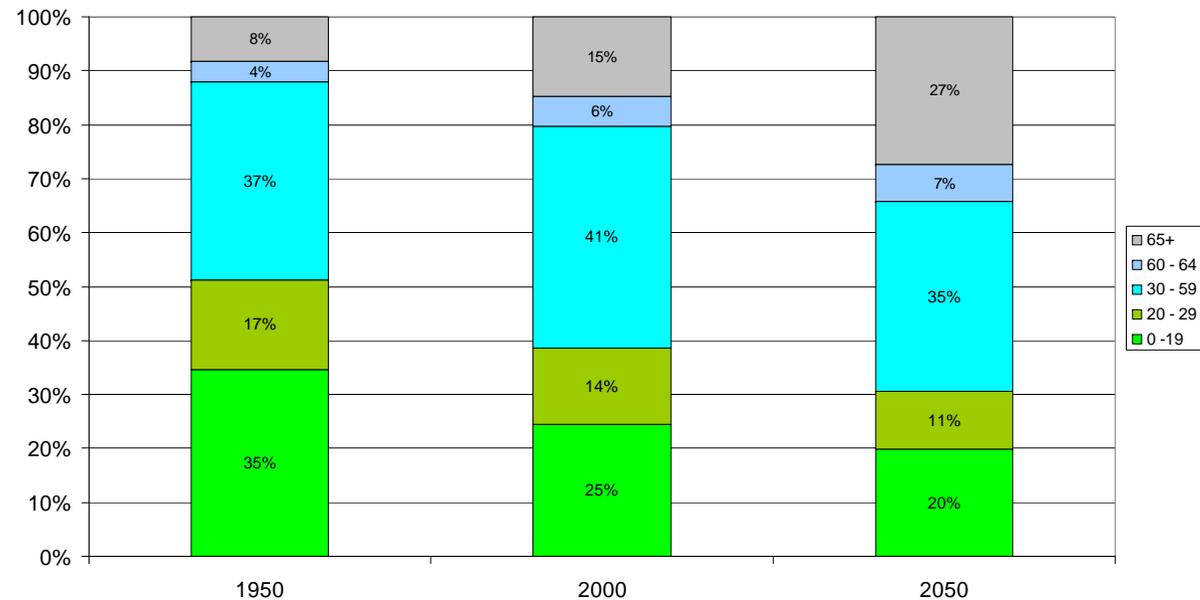

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Overall trend in Europe and elsewhere:

- Rising life expectancy
- Declining Birth rates
- More people are expected to need age-related care for a longer time

Age-range Distribution (Europe 1950; 2000; 2050)



- Stress on financing of health care, pensions
- Possible shortage of care/nursing personnel
- Problem intensifies in times of economic crisis, unemployment, low incomes
- Uncertainties for future generations of elderly/retirees

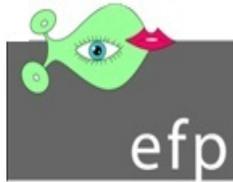
Major Problem: Dementia

“If dementia care were a country, it would be the world’s 18th largest economy, ranking between Turkey and Indonesia. If it were a company, it would be the world’s largest by annual revenue exceeding Wal-Mart (US\$414 billion) and Exxon Mobil (US\$311 billion)”.

World Alzheimer Report,
(2010 <http://www.alz.co.uk/research/files/WorldAlzheimerReport2010.pdf>)

“The current investment in research, treatment and care is actually quite disproportionate to the overall impact of the disease on people with dementia, the carers, on health and social care systems, and on society”

Professor Martin Prince
King's College London
(BBC, 2009 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/health/8263856.stm>)



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Ideas to tackle the socio-economic & financial challenges of the aging society:



- Increase of retirement age
(may not be feasible if people are not able to work or no jobs are available; early retirement still practiced)



- Immigration for compensating for shrinking populations
(bears social challenges, domestic unemployment still exists)



- Changes in pension and health insurance towards more privatisation and self-responsibility/saving
(possible greater divides between rich and poor, affordability, additional burden for current younger generation)



- Incentives for care workers *(higher wages would add to high costs)*

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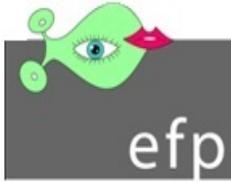
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Ideas to tackle challenges of elderly care:



- Elderly taking care of even older people
(may require support, supervision, training)



- Family Care *(challenging job, requires training, prevents from other jobs, challenging for family life)*



- Cost reductions/compensation of personnel shortages through technological support, e.g. telehealth/eHealth, robotics, smart living *(some technologies are still not sophisticated enough, legal/ethical/regulatory issues, costs, investments, R&D)*



- Nursing home innovation/modernisation *(cost, personnel issue)*

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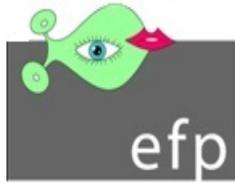
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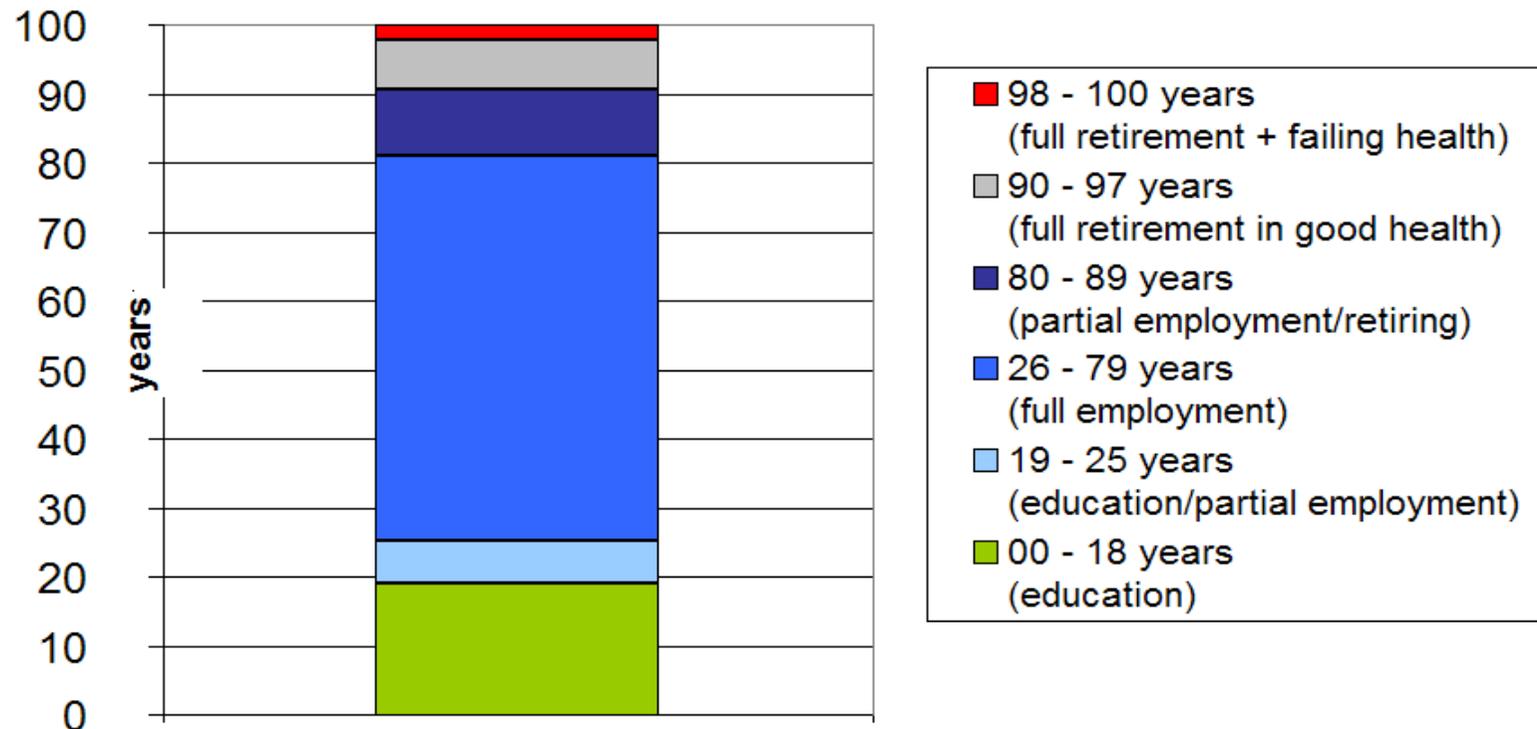

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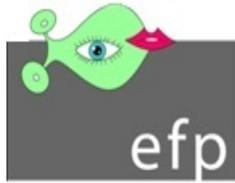

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Aging as such is not the problem, but failing health!

Imagine the following (hypothetical) vita:





The amount of unhealthy years needs to be shortened!

Proposed ideas/strategies:



- Healthy Aging

- Compression of Morbidity

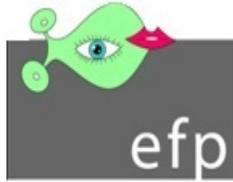


- Compensation for age-related disabilities

- Therapy for Age-Related Diseases



- Slow down of aging process



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Research Questions and Innovations:

- **What contributes to healthy aging and how can this be achieved?**
 - Life style (nutrition, activity, physiology, psychology)
 - Products/product quality
 - Support/education
- **What are the major problems and diseases with aging?**
 - Prioritizing and understanding of issues
 - Feasibility of developing treatments and cures
 - Is “compression of morbidity” possible?
- **What are the causes and mechanisms of aging and aging problems?**
 - Basic research in biogerontology
 - Can causes for age-related problems be countered?
 - Should aging itself be seen as a ‘disease’?

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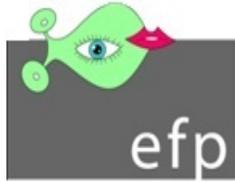
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Research Questions and Innovations:

• **Technical support systems**

- Which systems are most useful/beneficial?
- Costs, affordability, equity questions
- Reliability, legal requirements

• **Socio-economic changes**

- Pension schemes, retirement age, social insurance systems
- Jobs for the elderly
- Balancing needs of younger and older generations
- Coping with shortages in care personnel
- Can health/medical costs be lowered in an ethically responsible way?
- How to encourage a generally healthier life style?
- Socio-ethical issues related to “demands” for health improvement

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What are the major problems?

What are suggested solutions?

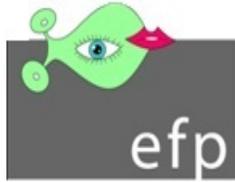
How feasible are the solutions?

Which implications may come with the preferred solutions?

What needs to be done to make the preferred solutions reality (policy)?

- Science and technology
- Law, regulations policy
- Financing
- Social framework

→ Probable and desirable futures?!



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